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CHIEF'S BRIEFING BOOK

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

JANUARY 1997

USDA Forest Service
CHIEF'S BRIEFING BOOK

JANUARY 1997

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Overview

Our land ethic is to promote the sustainability of ecosystems by ensuring their health, diversity, and productivity. Our ethic includes the active use of ecosystems, through both preservation and manipulation, to provide both commodity and non-commodity benefits--so long as this use does not unduly impact ecosystem sustainability.

Our service ethic is to tell the truth, obey the law, work collaboratively, and use appropriate scientific information in caring for the land and serving people.

We live our ethics through ecosystem management by focusing our priorities on the four elements of our "Ethics and Course to the Future": **protect ecosystems, restore deteriorated ecosystems, provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems, and ensure organizational effectiveness.**

Two key principles underlie the Forest Service's organizational structure. The first is decentralization, which keeps the decisions as close to the natural resources and customers as possible. The second principle is independence of the research and management programs of the Forest Service. This ensures research results are as objective as possible. The Forest Service has as a major objective to ensure that research findings are fully considered in the decision process.

The Forest Service is the largest of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, employing about 30,211 permanent employees and a total of about 37,505 full-time equivalents (FTE's) in FY 1997. About 98 percent of the total work force works outside Washington, D.C., and about 85 percent works west of the Mississippi River.

The Forest Service has a broad array of programs to achieve its mission, including:

Forest Research (RES): The Forest Service has the largest forestry research organization in the world that provides the scientific foundation for sustainable forest development in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

State and Private Forestry (S&PF): State and Private Forestry provides technical and financial forestry and conservation assistance using collaborative approaches, a diverse array of programs, and a unique delivery system based upon a broad, flexible legal authority. These are used to link forestry and conservation with people, from the inner city to remote rural areas, to sustain our communities, and to care for the Nation's forests across all ownerships. Certain program assistance to State, communities, and non-industrial private forest landowners requires matching contributions. All the program activities directly contribute to the national goals for air and water quality, wildlife habitat, production of goods and services and the socio-economic well-being of communities.

National Forests and Grasslands (NFS): The Forest Service manages about 191 million acres of public land, which comprise 8.5 percent of the total land area in the United States. These

public lands are some of the Nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and special significance for all Americans.

International Forestry (IF): International Forestry manages a comprehensive program integrating policy and technical cooperation to link the Forest Service with partners internationally for collaboration on the most critical management and policy issues affecting the U.S. and target countries.

Administration (ADM): Administrations role in advancing management strategies is to provide leadership, direction, quality assurance, and customer service in carrying out the Forest Service business and human resource programs and in guiding development and implementation of changes in programs, processes, and organization.

Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I): The Forest Service maintains a law enforcement and investigations organization for resource and public protection. It is organized in a "straight line reporting structure" with the Director reporting to the Chief.

Public Affairs Office (PAO): Public Affairs provides leadership for Forest Service communications externally and internally. A especially critical role is PAO support for communication with the Department through briefings, weekly and monthly reports, and media coordination.

Critical Issue Briefing Papers

The Chief's briefing book contains three types of briefing papers: (1) Priority issues for the Chief's involvement; (2) Important issues or items for the Chief's attention; and (3) Program background. All are important, but those in the first group require more immediate attention from the Chief, while those in the second group are likely to come before him within the next few months. Finally, it is important for the Chief to have a summary of each of the Forest Service program areas available for ready reference. This briefing book contains all three kinds of briefing papers.

A number of issues are especially important due to their urgency, their importance to the agency mission, and/or the level of intense current interest within and outside the Forest Service. Timely engagement and support by the Chief can make a significant difference in potential outcomes. These priority issues fall into two broad categories:

<u>Protecting and Restoring ecosystems, providing multiple benefits for people</u>. **(Sustaining the health of the land)**

1. Implement ecosystem management.
2. Ecoregional assessments.
3. Implement a forest health policy.

4. Wildland fire management.

5. Implement the President's Forest Plan.

6. Implement the Salvage Provisions of the Rescission Act.

7. Implement the Ski Fee Bill.

8. Improve rangeland health.

9. Issue new National Forest Management Act planning regulations.

10. Resolve Tongass National Forest planning issues.

11. Resolve California Spotted Owl-Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) issues.

12. Understand the status of forest plan revisions.

13. Support initiatives in Hazardous waste cleanup.

Additional opportunities for the Chief's involvement would lead to improved internal and external working relationships and organizational effectiveness. Some of these include:

Organizational effectiveness. **(Collaborative Stewardship)**

1. Support public land and private entrepreneurship.

2. Support Forest Service stategic planning efforts. (Develop and implement the 1995 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) strategic plan and pilot fiscal year (FY) 1998 performance plan) .

3. Facilitate Forest Service reengineering and reinvention.

4. Support research-based land management and decisionmaking.

5. Review and propose appropriate changes in legislative authorities..

6. Engage in and support Forest Service FY 1998 and FY 1999 budget efforts.

7. Address potential devolution of public lands.

8. Address violence towards Forest Service employees

9. Improve employee morale and resolve key employee issues.

10. Improve working relationships with Congress, the Administration, and interest groups.

11. Develop better collaborative relationships with other Federal and State regulatory and resource management agencies.

12. Improve Forest Service financial management.

13. Improve organizational accountability.

14. Encourage and support the consideration of environmental justice in Forest Service decisionmaking and program delivery.

The Chief's Office is likely to have several issues brought to its attention over the next several months. Given the breadth of Forest Service programs and their wide geographic distribution, these issues could arise from a number of places. Many are complex and continuing.

Topics that could be raised include water resource issues in many Western states, mining law reform, ski area permit fees, implementation of the President's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan, wolf reintroduction, and others related to threatened and endangered species, Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan, Columbia River Basin land management, engagement of local interests in the forest planing process (i.e., Quincy Library Group), consolidation of the Intermountain and Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Stations, and State and county rights questions that affect the management of Federal land.

Finally, a third category of information needs includes background on the various program areas of the Forest Service. This provides an opportunity for the Deputy Chiefs and Directors of Law Enforcement and Investigations and Public Affairs to update the Chief's Office on the status, opportunities, and issues within their areas of responsibility.

USDA Forest Service
OVERVIEW

Our Mission

The phrase **"Caring for the Land and Serving People"** captures the spirit of the Forest Service mission. The Forest Service mission is to achieve quality land management under sustainable multiple use management concepts to meet the diverse needs of people.

The Forest Service provides leadership in the management, protection, and use of the Nation's forests and rangelands. The Forest Service has embraced ecosystem management as its operating philosophy. In the delivery of all its programs, the Forest Service takes an ecological approach to the implementation of multiple use management to provide sustained yields of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation.

The research program of the Forest Service conducts scientific studies to enhance and protect productivity on all of America's forests and rangelands, with special attention to long-term natural resource issues having national and international scope. In cooperation with State and local governments, the agency's State and Private Forestry program provides professional and financial assistance to Tribal governments, and rural landowners and communities on forestry and economic development. The Forest Service is responsible for the 191-million-acre National Forest System (NFS), with its 155 national forests (NF's) (since a number of national forests have been administratively combined but are retained as separate units [i.e., the Shasta-Trinity National Forests or the Idaho Panhandle National Forests], there are 119 administrative units) and 20 national grasslands (NG's), in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The International Forestry (IF) program of the Forest Service enables the agency to share its technical expertise and managerial skills with other nations where U.S. interests are involved.

Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future

Our Land and Service Ethics

The Forest Service draws passion and commitment in its mission from its land and service ethics.

"Our land ethic is to promote the sustainability of ecosystems by ensuring their health, diversity, and productivity."

Growing understanding of the complexity of ecosystems has expanded thinking on sustainability--from emphasis on sustained product yields to sustaining the ecosystems that provide a variety of benefits.

Through ecosystem sustainability, present and future generations will reap the benefits that healthy, diverse, and productive ecosystems provide. Our ethic includes the active use of

ecosystems, through both preservation and manipulation, to gain these benefits--as long as this use does not unduly impact ecosystem sustainability.

"Our service ethic is to tell the truth, obey the law, work collaboratively, and use appropriate scientific information in caring for the land and serving people."

Maintaining public trust requires living our service ethic while balancing responsiveness, representativeness, and efficiency. The Forest Service was created by and for the people. Hence, we communicate with and listen to the public and their elected representatives. We consistently obey the law and tell the truth. We work collaboratively to integrate science and public participation into management.

We are striving to represent society by recruiting and maintaining a work force that reflects the diversity of the American public, ensuring that this work force includes the professional disciplines required to successfully execute ecosystem management, and expanding our recognized public to include more segments of the population and to consider future generations.

Our Course to the Future

We live our land and service ethics and achieve our mission through the development and practice of ecosystem management in the delivery of all our research, State and non-industrial landowner assistance, national forest land management, and international programs. Ecosystem management is the means by which the Forest Service will achieve the goal of sustainability. Simply stated, ecosystem management means the integration of ecological, economic, and social factors in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment to best meet current and future needs.

Our Course to the Future describes the management context and helps focus our priorities on providing sustainable benefits to the American people and to the world. The four goals of our course are:

1. *Protect ecosystems.*

The Forest Service will work to ensure the health and diversity of ecosystems while meeting people's needs. Special care for fragile or rare ecosystem components will be instituted on NFS lands and encouraged on other lands.

2. *Restore deteriorated ecosystems.*

The Forest Service will improve deteriorated ecosystems on NFS lands. We will develop scientific understanding and technologies needed for effective restoration. State and Private Forestry and international assistance programs will encourage ecosystem restoration. These efforts will improve the likelihood that diversity, long-term sustainability, and future options are maintained.

3. *Provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems.*

Within the limitations of maintaining ecosystem health and diversity, forests and rangelands must meet people's needs for uses, values, products, and services. Forest Service programs will focus on providing benefits to people from these lands, emphasizing those that the natural forest and grasslands have special advantages to provide. We will offer assistance to owners and managers on other forests and rangelands to help them fulfill their objectives in an ecologically sound manner.

4. *Ensure organizational effectiveness.*

The Forest Service will improve organizational effectiveness by creating and maintaining an atmosphere where people are respected, trusted, and valued, and where expertise and professionalism are rewarded. Our work force will be multicultural and multidisciplinary. Forest Service employees will be empowered to carry out the agency's mission and will be accountable for achieving negotiated objectives.

Listening to, learning about, and collaborating with the citizens of the United States--the owners of public land--is a continuous process. The Forest Service will use appropriate scientific information in decisionmaking processes, and will involve diverse communities of interest in decisions. Partnerships and collaboration with an expanding array of groups will characterize Forest Service operations.

The three primary outcomes of the Forest Service Course to the Future will be healthy ecosystems, vital communities, and an effective, multidisciplinary, multicultural organization.

Long-Term Strategic Planning

Strategic planning in the Forest Service is a continuous and adaptive process guided by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. The FY 1995 draft program flows from and builds upon the Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future. RPA requires the Forest Service to prepare an assessment of renewable resources on all lands every 10 years and a recommended program for Forest Service activities every 5 years. This recommended program is the agency's long-term strategic plan as required by GPRA. RPA, through its link to the GPRA strategic plan and GPRA annual performance plan, provides guidance to Forest Service planning, budget development, and establishment of program and policy priorities. The recommended RPA program is currently being developed for submission to the 105th Congress.

History, Organization, and Authorities

Evolution of Forest Service Programs

The Forest Service has a long tradition of research, technical assistance, and land management. Established in the infancy of the conservation movement, it has been led by trained, professional career land managers since its inception.

Legislation in the 1960's and 1970's such as the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) have provided new mandates for management of the NFS, and have created many more avenues for public participation in management decisions.

These new laws reflect increased public interest in the management of the national forests and grasslands. This increased interest has intensified conflict regarding the proper balance of multiple uses and benefits, particularly between people who value amenities and those whose livelihood is dependent on use of National Forest System commodity resources. The current controversy regarding timber harvest levels and protection of old-growth forests in the Northwest is a good example of this conflict.

Legislation during this period has also given the Forest Service a much broader role in technical and financial assistance for management of State and private forest lands, community forestry, and rural community economic assistance. It has also greatly expanded responsibilities in international forestry.

Organizational Structure

Two key principles underlie the Forest Service's overall organizational structure. The first is decentralization. Forest Service leaders have always strongly believed that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level, consistent with ensuring effective managerial control and compliance with relevant laws, Executive Orders, and USDA regulations. Local line officers, such as the 590 district rangers and 122 forest supervisors, are delegated broad authority to make decisions on the ground.

The second principle is independence of the Forest Service's research and management programs. This ensures research results that are unbiased and reflect the best science available.

Major Statutory Authorities

Many statutes provide the legislative mandate for Forest Service programs. Most of the statutes fall into one of the three major categories described here. Example statutes are listed for each category.

1. Statutes providing broad authority for Forest Service programs:

The Organic Act of 1897

The Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974

The National Forest Management Act of 1976

The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, as amended.

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978

International Forestry Cooperative Act of 1990

The 1990 and 1995 Farm Bill

2. Procedural and environmental statutes affecting all Federal programs:

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

The Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973

The Clean Water Amendments Act of 1972

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977

3. Statutes allocating NFS lands to specific management regimes:

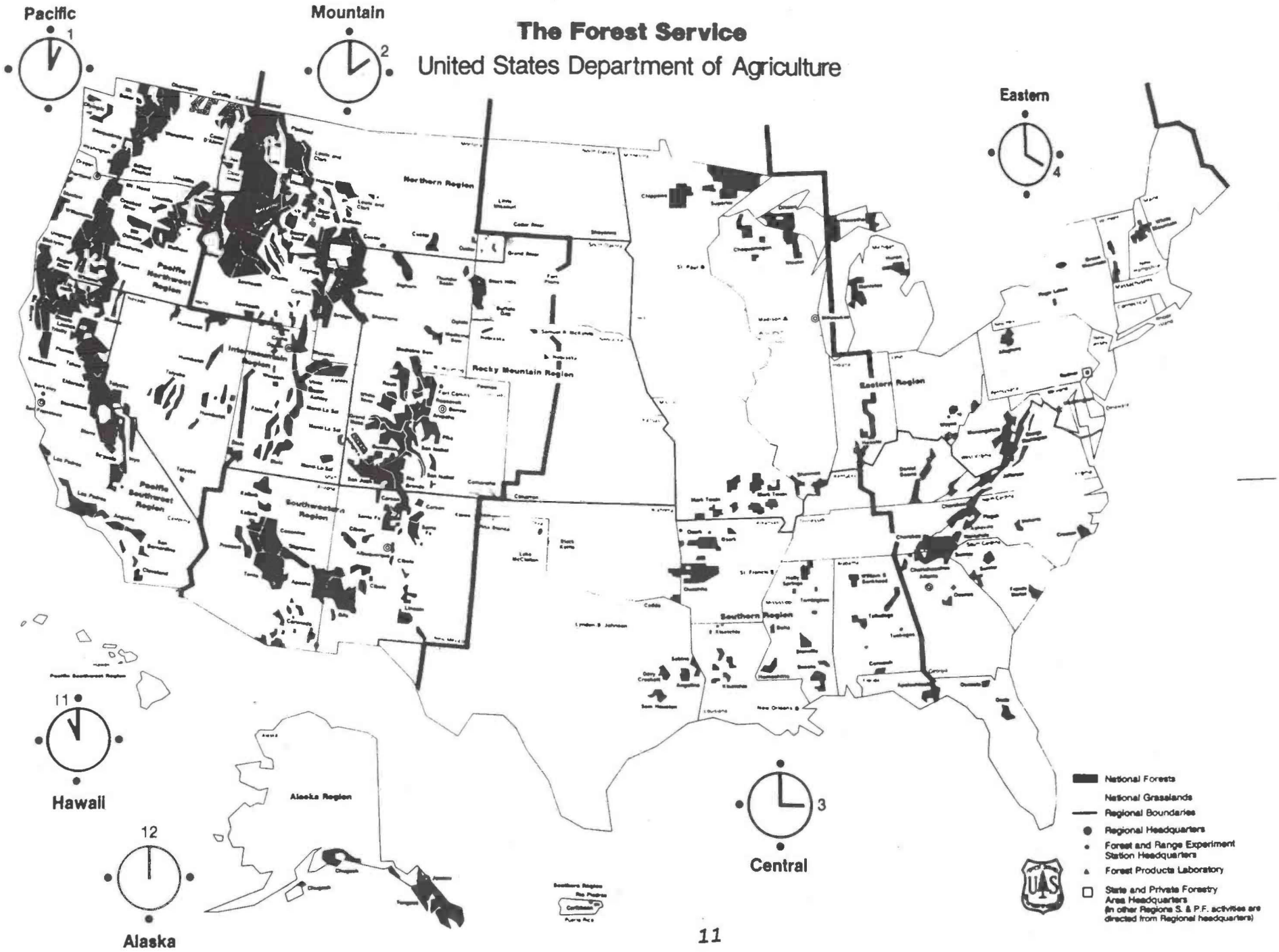
The Wilderness Act of 1964

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

A complete compilation of statutes is found in **"The Principal Laws Relating to Forest Service Activities."**

Description of Programs

The Forest Service carries out its mission through integrated program areas: Research, State and Private Forestry, management of the National Forest System, International Forestry, and management of human resources. Figure 1 shows the overall organization of the Forest Service. Figure 2 shows the current and Figure 3 shows the proposed organization of the National office.


Pacific
1
Mountain
2
The Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Eastern
4
Northern Region
Rocky Mountain Region
Eastern Region
Southwestern Region
Pacific Southwest Region
Pacific Northwest Region
Southern Region
Alaska Region
11
Hawaii
12
Alaska
3
Central
National Forests
National Grasslands
Regional Boundaries
Regional Headquarters
Forest and Range Experiment Station Headquarters
Forest Products Laboratory
State and Private Forestry Area Headquarters
(In other Regions S. & P.F. activities are directed from Regional headquarters)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

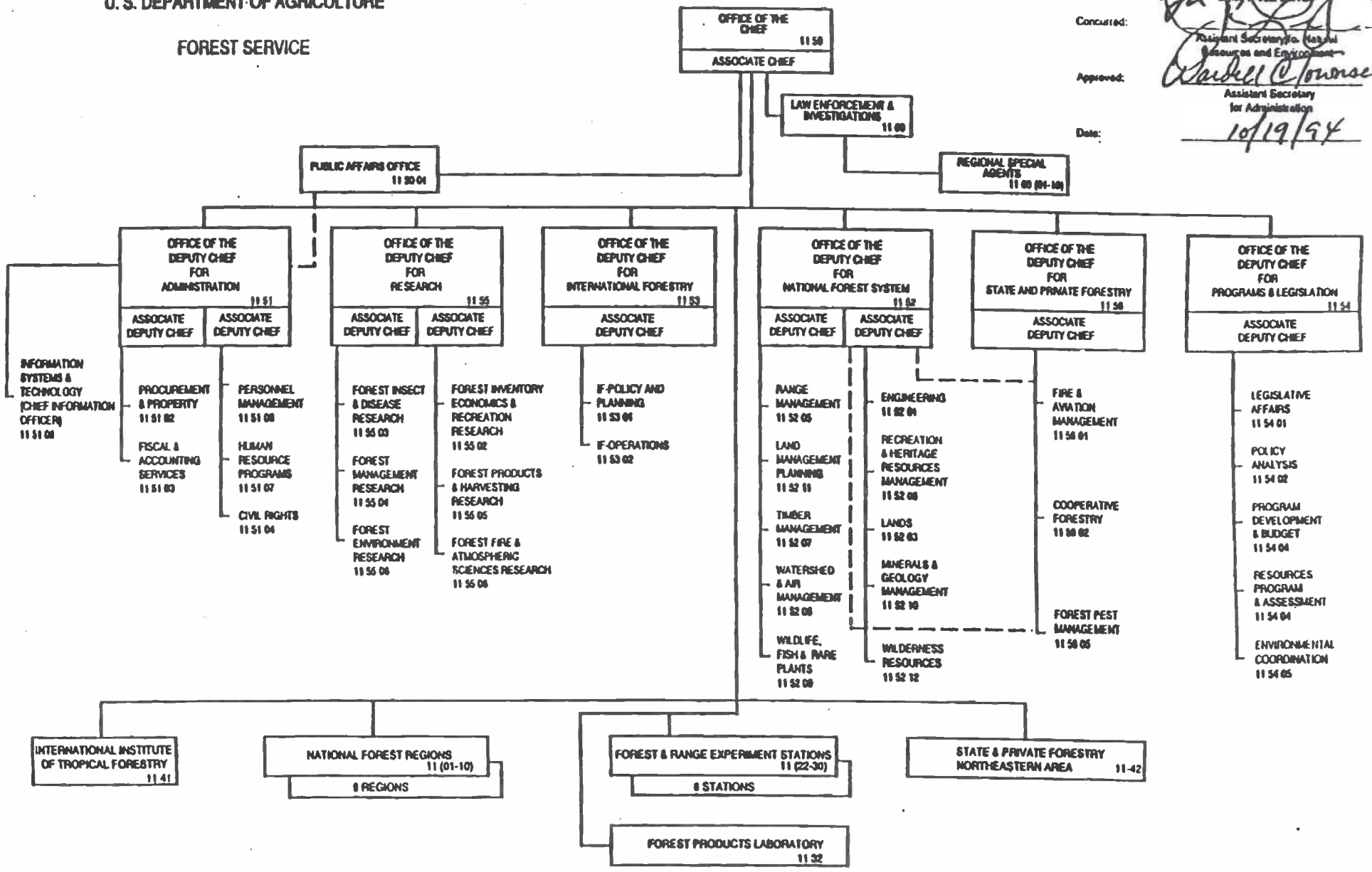
FOREST SERVICE

Recommended: Chief, Forest Service

Concurred: Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

Approved: Assistant Secretary for Administration

Date: 10/19/94


OFFICE OF THE CHIEF 11 50
ASSOCIATE CHIEF
LAW ENFORCEMENT & INVESTIGATIONS 11 60
REGIONAL SPECIAL AGENTS 11 60 (01-10)
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE 11 50 01
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR ADMINISTRATION 11 51
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
INFORMATION SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGY (CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER) 11 51 00
PROCUREMENT & PROPERTY 11 51 02
FISCAL & ACCOUNTING SERVICES 11 51 03
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT 11 51 06
HUMAN RESOURCE PROGRAMS 11 51 07
CIVIL RIGHTS 11 51 04
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR RESEARCH 11 55
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
FOREST INSECT & DISEASE RESEARCH 11 55 03
FOREST MANAGEMENT RESEARCH 11 55 04
FOREST ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH 11 55 06
FOREST INVENTORY ECONOMICS & RECREATION RESEARCH 11 55 02
FOREST PRODUCTS & HARVESTING RESEARCH 11 55 05
FOREST FIRE & ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES RESEARCH 11 55 08
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY 11 53
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
IF-POLICY AND PLANNING 11 53 01
IF-OPERATIONS 11 53 02
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM 11 52
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
RANGE MANAGEMENT 11 52 05
LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING 11 52 11
TIMBER MANAGEMENT 11 52 07
WATERSHED & AIR MANAGEMENT 11 52 08
WILDLIFE, FISH & RARE PLANTS 11 52 09
ENGINEERING 11 52 01
RECREATION & HERITAGE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT 11 52 06
LANDS 11 52 03
MINERALS & GEOLOGY MANAGEMENT 11 52 10
WILDERNESS RESOURCES 11 52 12
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY 11 56
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
FIRE & AVIATION MANAGEMENT 11 56 01
COOPERATIVE FORESTRY 11 56 02
FOREST PEST MANAGEMENT 11 56 05
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FOR PROGRAMS & LEGISLATION 11 54
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS 11 54 01
POLICY ANALYSIS 11 54 02
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & BUDGET 11 54 04
RESOURCES PROGRAM & ASSESSMENT 11 54 04
ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION 11 54 05
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL FORESTRY 11 41
NATIONAL FOREST REGIONS 11 (01-10)
9 REGIONS
FOREST & RANGE EXPERIMENT STATIONS 11 (22-30)
8 STATIONS
STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY NORTHEASTERN AREA 11-42
FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY 11 32

Supersedes Chart Dated: MAR 14 1994

Prepared by: Work Force Management and Systems Branch
Personnel Management Staff
Forest Service

MISSION OF THE FOREST SERVICE IS TO PROVIDE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN FOREST MANAGEMENT, PROTECTION, AND UTILIZATION, INVOLVING PARTICIPATION IN DESIGNING NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR LAND USE. FORMULATION OF PROGRAMS TO MEET NATIONAL OBJECTIVES, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF FEDERAL FORESTRY POLICIES TO ASSURE MAXIMUM CONTRIBUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE FOREST SERVICE MISSION INCLUDES THREE MAJOR AREAS OF OPERATION: (1) MANAGEMENT, PROTECTION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE 191 MILLION ACRE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM; (2) COOPERATION WITH STATE FORESTERS, PRIVATE OWNERS OF FOREST LANDS, WOODS PROCESSORS, AND PRIVATE AND PUBLIC AGENCIES; AND (3) CONDUCTING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES THAT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SUPPORT THE FOREST SERVICE MISSION TO IMPROVE FORESTRY AND FOREST-RELATED RESOURCES ON ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FOREST AND RANGE LANDS.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

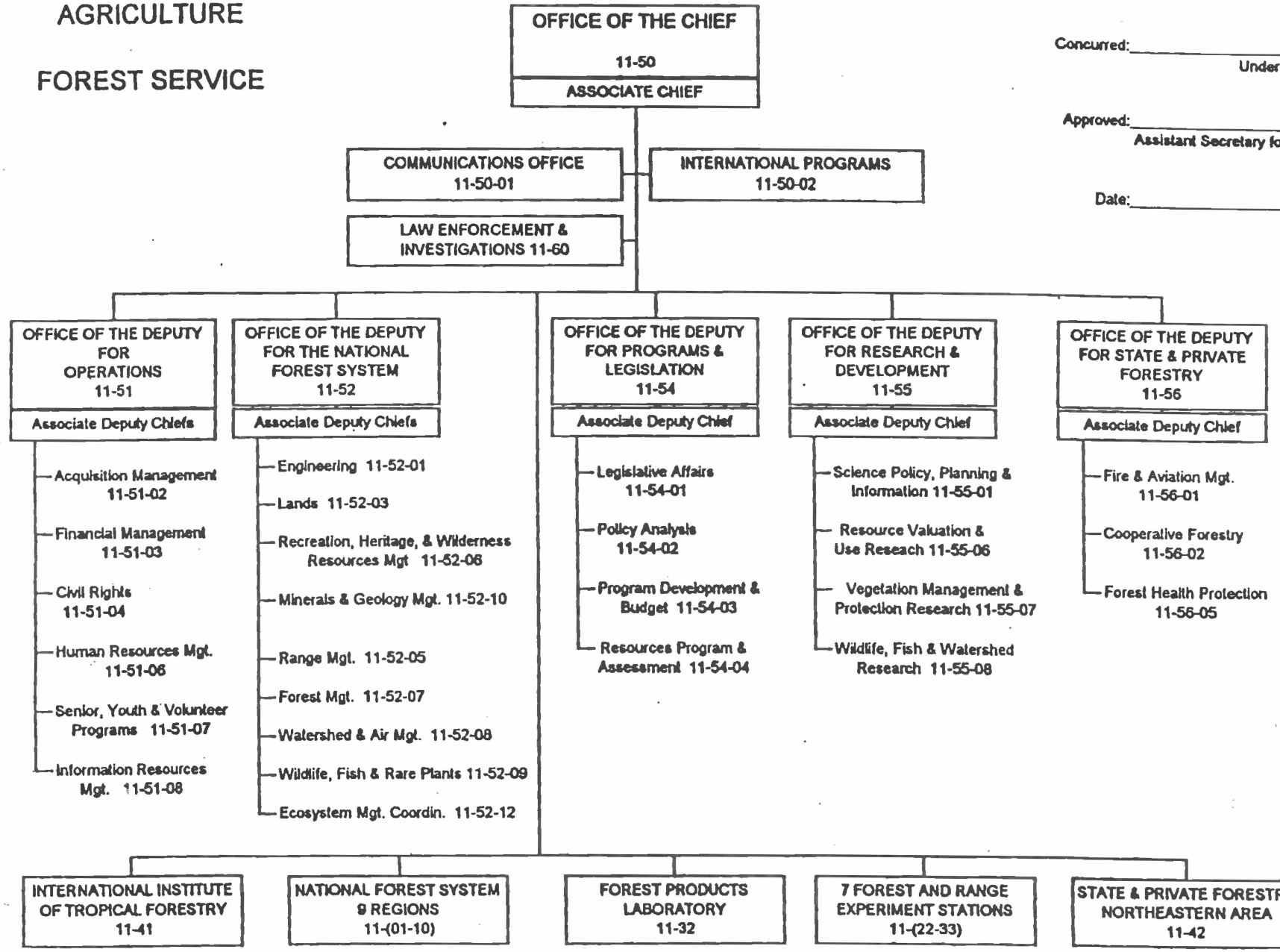
FOREST SERVICE

Recommended: _____
Chief, USDA Forest Service

Concurred: _____
Under Secretary, NRE

Approved: _____
Assistant Secretary for Administration

Date: _____



FOREST SERVICE MISSION: As set forth in law, the mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use concept to meet the diverse needs of people. The agency manages the 191.6 million acre National Forest System for many purposes and a comprehensive research program; provides for cooperative forestry assistance to States, communities, and private forest landowners; and conducts international forestry activities in cooperation with other countries.

Supercedes Chart Dated: _____
Prepared by: Personnel Management Staff, Forest Service

Forest Research

The Forest Service has one of the largest Federally funded forestry research organization in the world: seven research stations, the Forest Products Laboratory, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, all supported by research laboratories at 67 locations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Research (RES) serves society by providing the scientific foundation for sustainable forest development in the United States and other regions of the world. It provides information and technology needed to assure the health, diversity, and productivity of the Earth's forest and grassland ecosystems. The program includes cooperative planning and studies with other public research agencies, universities, and private research organizations. It works for and with users, policy makers, natural resource managers, educators, industries, and other producers who represent people and their needs. The map in Figure 4 shows the location of Forest Service Research stations across the Nation.

State and Private Forestry

The Forest Service provides professional and financial assistance to a wide range of non-Federal forest landowners. The State and Private Forestry (S&PF) program is delivered through S&PF and NFS technical program specialists and state foresters located throughout the Nation. It is managed through the various regional offices of the National Forest System in the west and southern U.S. and from the headquarters of the Northeastern Area of S&P Forestry, located at Radnor, Pennsylvania, for the northeast and north central part of the U.S.

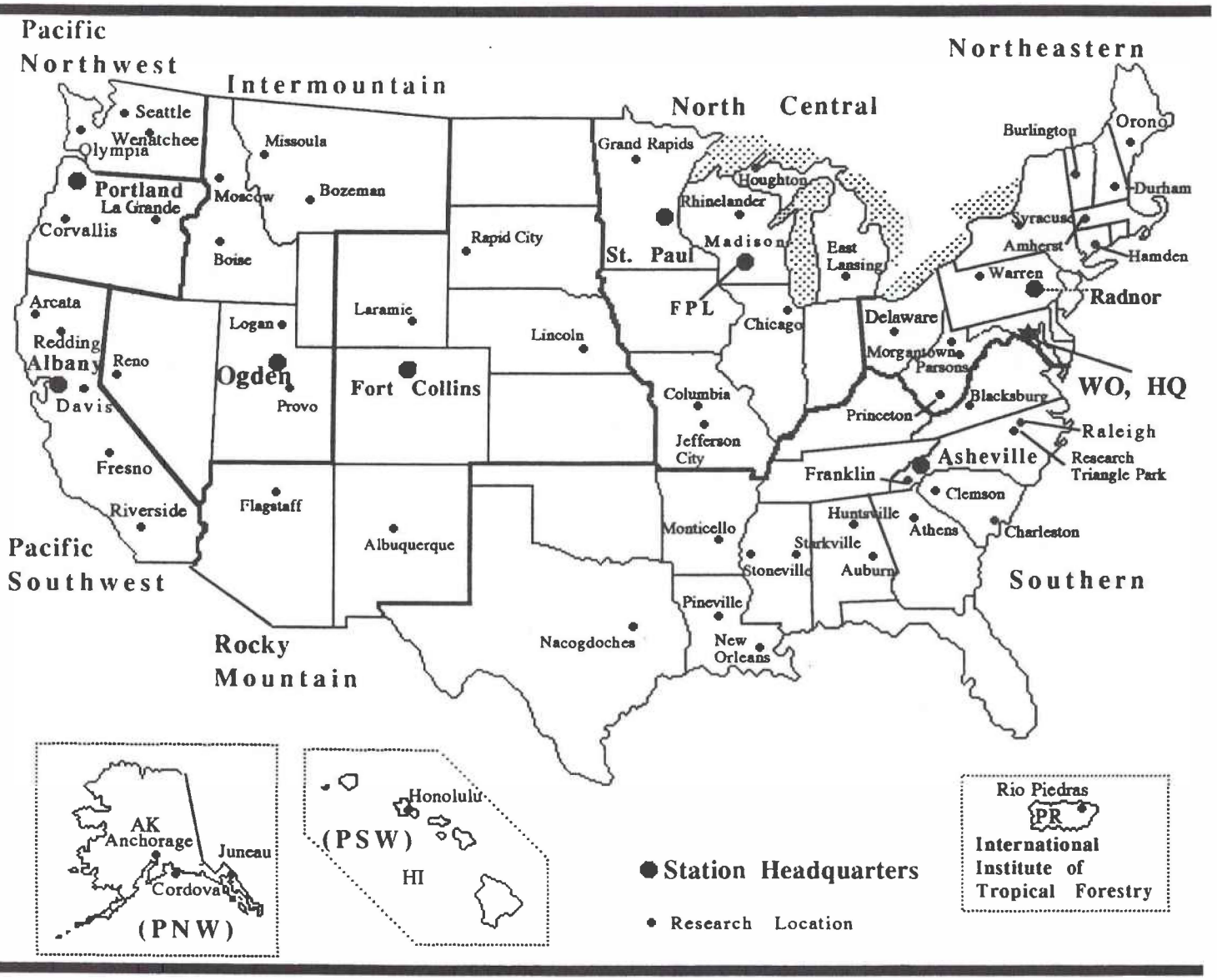
Through its nonregulatory and voluntary programs, the Forest Service assists private landowners, communities, State forestry and related agencies, Tribal governments, and other Federal agencies by helping them protect forests and rangelands from fire, insects, and disease; monitor the health of the Nation's forests; and assist others with improving the management of their lands.

About 48 percent of the Nation's forest land (and 59 percent of commercial forest land) are owned and managed by 9.9 million nonindustrial private owners. Decisions made by State, local, Tribal governments and private landowners affect conditions of almost two-thirds of America's forest resource base. Proper management of these lands is essential to maintain long-term wood supply and the economic and environmental well-being of our Nation.

Urban forestry programs are focused on the 70 million acres of urban and community forests in 56,000 of the Nation's communities. S&PF leads an agency-wide effort to help States and communities use forests to promote rural economic development and a quality rural environment.

The Forest Service wildland Fire Protection Program protects life, property, and natural resources on the 191 million acres of NFS lands and through fee or reciprocal protection agreements, 20 million acres of adjacent State and private lands. This cost effective program is responsive to wildfire presuppression and fuels management activities and is maintained at a level commensurate with the threat to life and property, public values, and management objectives. The presuppression program provides the capability to prevent forest fires and to take prompt, effective initial suppression action on wildfires. Activities are coordinated nationally through an interagency center located in Boise, Idaho.

Forest Service Research Stations
and Research Locations
FY 1997



Intermountain Research Station
Federal Building
324 25th St.
Ogden, UT 84401
801-625-5412

North Central Forest Experiment Station
1992 Folwell Ave.
St Paul. MN 55108
612-649-5000

Northeastern Forest Experiment Station
5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 200
PO Box 6775
Radnor PA 19087-4584
610-975-4222

Pacific Northwest Research Station
333 S.W. 1st Ave.
PO Box 3890
Portland. OR 97208
503-326-3592

Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station
800 Buchanan St. West Bldg.
Albany, CA 94701
510-559-6300

Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station
240 West Prospect
Fort Collins, CO 80526-2098
970-498-1100

Southern Research Station
PO Box 2680
Ashville, NC 28802
704-257-4300

Forest Products Laboratory
One Gifford Pinchot Dr.
Madison, WI 53705-2398
608-231-9200

International Institute of Tropical Forestry
Call Box 25000
UPR Experiment Station Grounds
Rio Piedras, PR 00928-2500
809-766-5335

Management of the National Forests and Grasslands

The Forest Service manages about 191 million acres of public land in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, comprising 8.5 percent of the total land area in the United States. These public lands, known collectively as the NFS, encompass 155 national forests, 20 national grasslands, and 10 land utilization projects. Over the years, a number of national forests have been administratively combined for organizational efficiency while retaining the integrity of the original forest units. For example, the Shasta National Forest and Trinity National Forest were combined under one forest supervisor as the Shasta-Trinity National Forests. The National Forest System lands and resources are administered through 119 National Forest Administrative Units, 8 National Grassland Administrative Units, 5 national recreations areas, and 2 national monuments. These are further divided into 592 subunits for management purposes.

The natural resources on these lands are some of the Nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and special significance for all Americans. Figure 5 shows the location of the national forests and regional and forest boundaries.

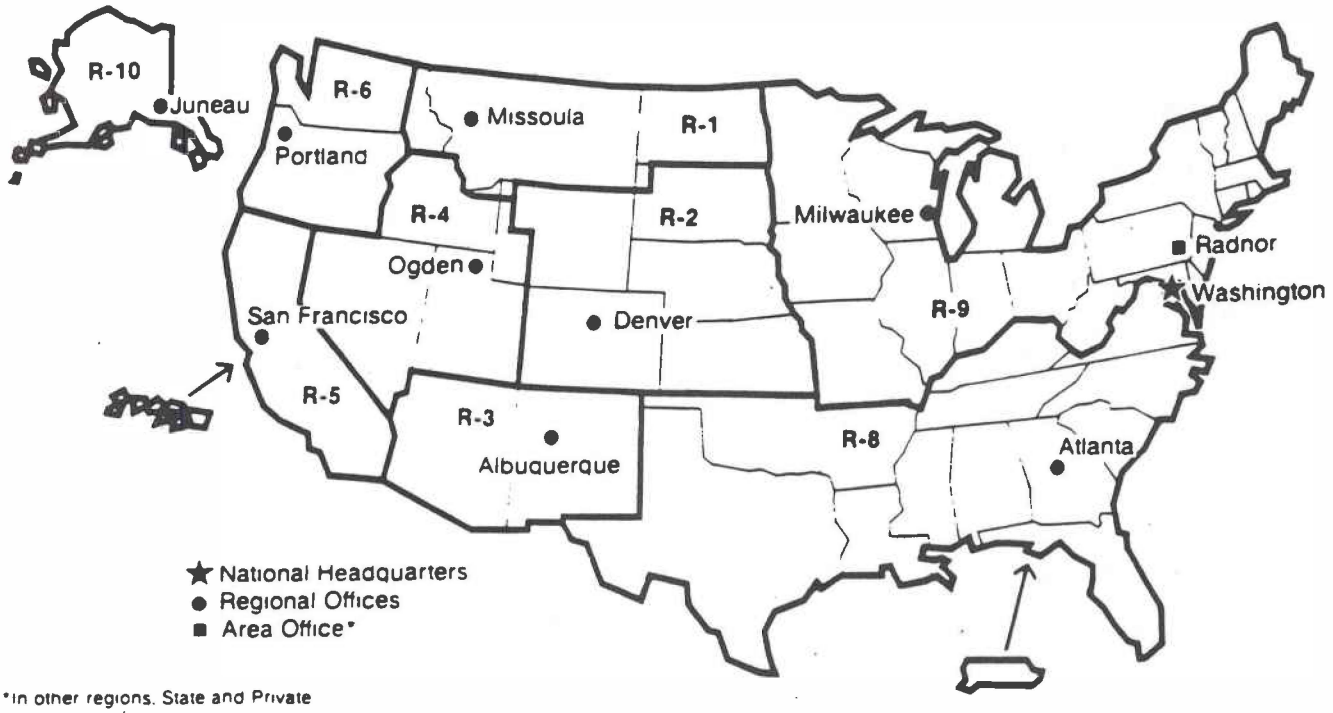
International Forestry

The purpose of the International Forestry (IF) program is to promote sustainable forest management internationally, yielding benefits to the U.S. and cooperating countries alike. IF facilitates technical collaboration and policy work in those countries with significant environmental and economic ties to the U.S. Our technical collaboration links Forest Service researchers and land managers with partners to team up on the most critical forest management issues. The policy work advances U.S. positions in international negotiations related to forestry, the environment, and trade. It has established the Forest Service as the lead technical agency on forest policy issues within the U.S. Government. Also, part of the IF program is the Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP), funded entirely from the U.S. agency for International Development's Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance. DASP provides disaster prevention, preparedness and response expertise to enhance U.S. Government coordination of activities and responses to disaster declarations in the U.S. and abroad.

Administration

Forest Service Administration provides leadership, direction, quality assurance, and customer service in carrying out agency business and human resource programs. Forest Service programs and employees are dependent on administrative leadership to provide the basic organizational management infrastructure. Through Administration, the Forest Service hires, trains, evaluates, and promotes its employees; pay employees and contractors; acquires office space, equipment and supplies, and other materials; and acquires, supports, and maintains basic computer and communication technology. Similarly, the human resource programs such as AmeriCorps, the Job Corps, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the volunteer program directly support many activities tied to the Forest Service's mission.

National Forest System Regional Offices
State and Private Forestry Area Office*



*In other regions, State and Private Forestry activities are directed from Regional Offices

● **Regional Offices**

Forest Service, USDA
Northern Region (R-1)
Federal Building
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807
406-329-3511

Forest Service, USDA
Rocky Mountain Region (R-2)
740 Simms Street
P.O. Box 25127
Lakewood, CO 80225
303-275-5350

Forest Service, USDA
Southwestern Region (R-3)
Federal Building
517 Gold Avenue, S.W.
Albuquerque, NM 87102
505-842-3292

Forest Service, USDA
Intermountain Region (R-4)
Federal Building
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401
801-625-5350

Forest Service, USDA
Pacific Southwest Region (R-5)
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-705-2874

Forest Service, USDA
Pacific Northwest Region (R-6)
333 S.W. 1st Avenue
P.O. Box 3623 (97208-3623)
Portland, OR 97204
503-326-2971

Forest Service, USDA
Southern Region (R-8)
1720 Peachtree Road, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30309-2417
404-347-2384

Forest Service, USDA
Eastern Region (R-9)
310 West Wisconsin Ave.,
Rm. 500
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414-297-3693

Forest Service, USDA
Alaska Region (R-10)
Federal Building
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
907-586-8863

■ **Area Office**

Forest Service, USDA
Northeastern Area—S&PF
5 Radnor Corporate Center
100 Matsonford Rd., Suite 200
P.O. Box 6775
Radnor, PA 19087-4585
610-975-4111

Programs and Legislation

The Forest Service national headquarters provides essential support to the national office, field units, and the Administration in the areas of strategic planning, annual performance planning, program and budget development, legislative affairs, and policy analyses. Because most Forest Service employees work outside Washington, D.C., providing effective liaison between the field units and the Department of Agriculture, other Departments, the Executive Office of the President, and the Congress is an essential headquarters staff activity.

The 1974 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) mandates an assessment every 10 years of the Nation's renewable resource situation and development every 5 years of a strategic plan describing Forest Service programs essential to maintain and improve the renewable resource situation. The 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) also mandates development of a strategic plan as well as the development of an annual performance plan and measurement and evaluation of performance results. The strategic plan and performance plan guide annual program and budget development activities, including formulating, presenting, and justifying Forest Service budget requests to the Department, OMB, and the Congress. Program development and budget activities ensure accountability for appropriations through annual reporting of accomplishments. The Legislative Affairs staff provides liaison with Congressional staff, tracks progress of pending legislation, analyzes legislative proposals, and prepares testimony for Departmental and Forest Service witnesses at hearings. Policy analyses are performed by a resident staff of experts who evaluate program options for the Chief.

Law Enforcement and Investigations

The Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I) staff functions in a unique manner within the Forest Service. LE&I has a total of 650 employees located throughout the National Forest System, operating under a unified budget with a straight line supervisory structure with the Director reporting to the Chief of the Forest Service since October of 1994. The organization includes 140 criminal investigators and 466 uniformed law enforcement officers. The role of LE&I is to provide for resource protection, protection of public property, and public safety. Examples of activities include internal investigations, investigation of timber theft, control of illicit drug activity on national forest land, protection of the public and government employees from terrorism, and general public safety on lands managed by the Forest Service.

Public Affairs Office

The Public Affairs Office provides leadership for corporate communications externally and internally including: The development of strategies to identify and engage constituencies in Forest Service decisionmaking; The collection and dissemination of pertinent information for decisionmakers about public values, opinions and actions (including historical context); The direction of strategic message delivery through marketing and communication planning efforts; Assistance for management of issues and conflict; and administration of customer services. Public Affairs provides executive support services for communication including print, video, electronic (including Internet) and in-person presentation support. The Public Affairs Office

works closely with field public affairs offices and with Washington Office Legislative Affairs in accomplishing these objectives.

Budget

The FY 1997 total appropriation amount is approximately the same as the FY 1995 and FY 1996 budgets. Major reductions in funding occurred for Forest and Rangeland Research in FY 1996. Pressure continues from both the Administration and Congress to further reduce funding for research. Reduced funding also continues in land acquisition. Increased funding is provided for State and Private Forestry forest health management programs. Excluding the one-time supplemental funding for emergency flood repair, funding in the National Forest System and Reconstruction/Construction appropriations for most program areas continues as in FY 1996 with the exception of additional funding for rangeland management and timber sales. Funding for Wildland Fire Management was increased $45 million over FY 1996.

FTE's allocations from the Office of Management and Budget increased from 38,330 in 1995 to 39,046 in 1997. For FY 1998, the allocation is 37,505. The Forest Service is on track to meet the FTE and GS-14 and above targets established in the Administration's streamlining plan.

Forest Service Budget Overview
(million of actual dollars)

DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATION	FY 1995 FINAL	FY 1996 FINAL	FY 1997 Appn.
FOREST AND RANGELAND RESEARCH	198.5	177.8	179.8
STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY	154.2	136.8	155.5
EMERGENCY PEST SUPPRESSION 1/	14.4	16.7	0
INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY 2/	5.0	{4.0}	{3.0}
NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM 3/	1338.1	1282. 3	1274.8
FIREFIGHTING 4/	385.6	485.5	530.0
RECONSTRUCTION/CONSTRUCTION 5/	196.5	224.3	175.0
LAND ACQUISITION	63.9	39.4	40.5
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS	6.5	5.3	5.4
TOTAL-DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATION	2357.7	2368.1 6/	2361.0

1/ This fund exhausted in FY 1996; beginning in FY 1997 funds available for suppression and indication are included under the State and Private appropriation.

2/ Separate appropriation was elimiated in FY 1996, amount shown for FY 1996 and FY 1997 is a limitation to be comprised of funding from other appropriations.

3/ FY 1996 amount includes one-time emergency supplemental funding for flood repair work in the amount of $26.6 million.

4/ An emergency contingency in the amount of $550 million has been established in FY 1997 to repay funds advanced from the Knutsen Vandenburg fund to over previous firefighting costs and to cover additional firefighting needs in Fy 1997.

5/ Includes roads, trails, and facilities; FY 1996 amount includes one-time emergency supplemental funding for flood repair work in the amount of $60.8 million.

6/ Excludes one-time SE Alaska assistances funds appropriation amount of $110 million.

CRITICAL ISSUE BRIEFING PAPERS

PRIORITY ISSUES

The following issues because of their urgency, their importance to achieving the Forest Service's mission, and Administration, Congressional, and interest group concern, are of immediate interest to the Chief. Here, understanding, support, and early involvement can be especially important.

The papers are arranged under two categories. (1) Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems, Providing Multiple Benefits for People; and (2) Organizational Effectiveness.

Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems, Providing Multiple Benefits for People **(Sustaining the health of the land)**

Implement Ecosystem Management

Significance: Since Chief Robertson established the direction in 1992, the Forest Service has been leading the natural resource field in implementing ecosystem management. It applies to all facets of the agency and is the means to the end of sustainability for the Nation's forests and grasslands.

Background:

* Ecosystem management means using an ecological approach to achieve the multiple-use management of National Forests and Grasslands (NFs and NGs). This approach blends the needs of people and environmental values in such a way that NFs and NGs represent diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystems. The principles of ecology and other biophysical and social sciences are factored into the technical assistance offered to private landowners. This technical assistance is offered on a voluntary basis to landowners so that they may meet their management objectives in an environmentally sound manner.

* Monitoring and evaluation are key elements of ecosystem management. Partnerships among Federal agencies, State and local governments, Tribal entities, and other interested parties are vital to implementation.

* Key to successful decisions based on an ecosystem approach is the full integration of social science and economic information with biological and physical information. These data are necessary for policy analyses, large scale assessments, forest planning, project-level analysis, and successful collaborative stewardship.

* Large-scale assessments (e.g., FEMAT, Columbia River Basin assessment, Eastside Study, Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Study, Southern Appalachian Assessment, and Great Lakes Assessment) determine the condition of the Nation's ecosystems and provide broad-scale information to assist implementation.

* In December 1995, an interagency workshop was held in Tucson, AZ, to address consolidating current understanding of options for implementing ecosystem management on Federal lands. Seven Federal agencies (FS, NOAA, BLM, FWS, USGS, NBS, NPS) and a wide range of private foundations and national interest groups sponsored the effort.

* The objective for the workshop was to develop a framework or reference guide for implementing ecosystem management. Each topic area will be addressed by two papers: one on a synthesis of the current scientific understanding of that topic, and one on the current management experience in implementing field activities related to that topic. Each paper is being developed by a team of scientists and resource managers. Development of drafts and a review process began in 1996, and final drafts are expected to be done by mid 1997.

Achievements:

* Conducted the Interagency Ecosystem Management Workshop in Tucson.
* Announced the ecosystem management framework for management.
* Adopted an ecological unit framework for classification and mapping.
* Conducted numerous experiments, demonstrations, and pilot efforts evaluating practices and activities that support an ecosystem management approach.
* Participating in White House Interagency Ecosystem Management Initiative.
* Working with Natural Resource Conservation Service to coordinate data systems.
* Working to institutionalize ecosystem management through new planning rule, ecological assessments, adaptive management, and improved information management.
* Concepts of ecosystem management integrated into the 1995 RPA Program.
* Developing a Human Dimensions Framework to provide guidance for integration social science information into large-scale assessments, forest plans, and policy decisions.

Remaining issues:

* Completion of the framework or reference guide for implementing ecosystem management.
* Continued support to implement the Northwest Forest Plan to restore deteriorated ecosystems, protect threatened and endangered species, and revitalize rural communities.
* Ensure that a strong research program is maintained to provide the scientific foundation needed to implement ecosystem management.
* Establishment of additional innovative partnerships and collaborative relationships that will facilitate attainment of ecosystem management objectives in mixed-ownership settings.

Key Forest Service Personnel: EMC Staff in WO, especially the EM Development Group deputy area. Ecosystem Management Corporate Team in WO, composed of WO Staff Directors providing guidance to National Leadership Team. Inter-regional Ecosystem Management Coordination Group (IREMCG), composed of Deputy Regional Foresters and Assistance Station Directors.

Priorities for Modest Funding: Fill four vacancies in Inventory and Monitoring Institute to get it up and running as soon as possible.

Important Contacts: The President, Congress, other Federal Agencies, State governments, user groups, interested organizations, and individuals. Congressional members who have shown a particular interest in this topic include: Sen. Craig (R-ID), Sen. Daschle (D-SD), and Sen. Leahy (D-VT). Congressional House members include Rep. Nethercutt, Jr. (R-WA), Rep. Miller (D-CA), Rep. Regula (R-OH), Rep. Vento (D-MN), and Rep. Young (R-AK).

Ecoregional Assessments

Issue: Nationally, ecoregional assessments are being conducted in a multiple partnership arena for a diverse set of goals and objectives. The Forest Service is utilizing these assessments to build consensus on regional issues as background information to be used in revising or updating forest land management plans.

Discussion: The Forest Service and numerous partners developed an adaptive approach to ecoregional assessments. A series of "lessons learned" workshops under this adaptive approach have identified a number of key findings associated with the conduct of ecoregional assessments. Key findings are:

Assessments are not decisionmaking documents. However, they do provide a synthesis of information in support of multiple scales of resource planning and decisionmaking.

Assessments should be issue driven.

A recurring theme is the need to keep data synthesis and acquisition strongly focused on the assessment issues.

Preassessment planning is critical to conducting an assessment.

Process, structures, and functions are the ecosystem components evaluated during the assessment process. These components need to be analyzed at multiple spacial and temporal scales.

Broad-scale assessments are a rich source of new information. Recognition of emergent properties of ecosystems at broader scales is an important part of this new information.

There is a need to develop implementation, effectiveness, and validation monitoring programs at multiple scales. These programs should update assessment information over time.

Ecoregional assessments can be linked using common information themes and protocols.

Cooperation with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) will help ensure data linkages among other national, regional, and landscape assessments.

Public participation for ecoregional assessments should be based on adaptive principles focused on achieving awareness and active involvement of a diverse array of stakeholders.

Public involvement is crucial to the success of assessments and provides benefits in later decisionmaking forums.

Due to their sheer size and to the complexity of ownership patterns, ecoregional assessments have a greater need for partnerships than any other planning process.

Assessments produce various tangible and intangible products including: findings, data, maps, references, changed relationships with participating agencies and the public and institutional and organizational change.

Products that address immediate needs and issues are most likely to get immediate use.
An interagency commitment needs to be made to ensure maintenance of data, maps, meta data, etc., . . . for future assessment and monitoring efforts.

Establishing an information management infrastructure in place prior to the assessment should be a high priority.

Proposed Actions:

Identify opportunities for cost savings including:

Leveraging federal, state and private funds;

Sharing and managing common data bases and information;

developing a staged process to address issues using existing data;

Develop the science related to conduct of assessments including integration of physical, biological, social and economic disciplines.

- Develop new ecological process models (eg. fire ignition and effects models), terrestrial and aquatic hierarchies, and social and economic analysis tools.

Identify overarching issues that transcend political boundaries.

Incorporate public involvement and participation earlier in the decision-making process.

Demonstrate the use of the Ecosystem Management Decision Support System (EMDSS) on ongoing assessments.

Develop a business model training guide for regional assessments and other large scale projects.

Budgets:

The estimated total costs for assessments to be completed in FY 1996 were:

Key People:

Interregional Ecosystem Management Coordinating Group: Associated with key tasks including development of an "Assessment Guidebook."

Ecosystem Management Corporate Team: Major interest in assessment policy.

Director of Ecosystem Management Coordination: Staff responsibility for national assessment coordination and planning.

Director of RPA: Staff responsibility for RPA and linkages to ecoregional assessments.

Implement A Forest Health Policy

Summary of Issue: A policy on forest health was recently developed, approved by the NLT, but not issued. We urge the Chief to issue the policy. This step will communicate the Forest Service's direction and be the basis for dialogue internally and externally.

Discussion: Currently, No forest health policy exists for the Forest Service.

Although, we do not believe that there is a forest health "crisis" there is no doubt that forest health concerns exist and that many forested ecosystems are becoming more susceptible to wildfire, drought, insects, and diseases. Values and resources at risk include human life and property, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, and forest products.

Forest Service leadership is essential to protecting and restoring forest health. The Forest Service is responsible for carrying out the Forest Health Protection Section of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. Under this Act, the Forest Service provides the national leadership and coordination to protect the Nation's forests from insects and diseases. In addition to being responsible for protection of the National Forest System, the Forest Service is responsible for providing technical and financial assistance for forest health management to the Department of the Interior, Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, Tribes, and, through State agencies, to private landowners. The Forest Service is the sole agency within the Federal government with these responsiblities.

Forest health legislation (e.g. ,Craig bill - but also Smith (OR) and Kyl (AZ)) is certain to be on the table in the 105th Congress. Rep. Taylor's (NC) forest health science panel will be issuing their report, including management guidelines, in late January 1997. The policy can help establish the Administration's and the Forest Service's positions.

In 1995, the Chief's office appointed an interdisciplinary team to develop a forest health policy for the Forest Service. Composed of employees from NFS, S&PF and RES headquarters staffs and field staffs in the East, South, and West, the team contacted over 500 individuals and organizations within and outside the Forest Service. An Interagency Forest Health team, including a state forester, was formed to provide input to the Forest Service.

Key features of the policy recommended by the team include:

* evaluation of forest health at the landscape scale,

* monitoring national and regional forest health, and

* addressing forest health in Forest Service planning efforts.

The policy objective is "to protect, improve, and restore the health of forested ecosystems throughout the Nation in cooperation with others." The policy includes a definition of forest health that features biological diversity, ecologial resiliency, sustainability and multiple use.

The policy developed by the team was completed in the form of an interim directive. The directive was to have been issued in the fall of 1996 along with notice in the Federal Register. A communications and marketing plan for the interim directive was developed. It was discussed with the Secretary who voiced his support; however, the Secretary's office asked the Forest Service to sound out other agencies and environmental interests. Resulting negative reaction by some of the persons contacted, together with the impending election, led to a joint decision by the Secretary's Office and Forest Service to hold off on issuing the policy.

The criticism of the forest health policy included: that forest health and salvage had become so linked that a broader view of the concept was lost; that forest health is too "tree oriented" and that ecosystem health should be the focus of the policy; that the definition was too commodity focused; and that sufficient recognition of biodiversity and endangered species was not given.

We continue to stress that the forest health policy is not just about dead trees, fires, or pest outbreaks, but rather is about protecting and restoring forest ecosystems to an ecologically resilient and sustainable condition.

Proposed Actions:

A strategy for implementing a policy on forest health is needed immediately. There are several options to proceed, including: (1) moving the current policy forward, (2) expanding the policy to include forest and rangeland health, or (3) taking on the larger, undefined issue of ecosystem health.

The policy can provide a focal point for a constructive dialogue among all partners about the future condition of forest and rangeland ecosystems and what the Forest Service should do to ensure their health. This dialogue will enable us to express and clarify our view of forest health and develop a final directive that will best meet the needs of the Forest Service and our partners.

We will formally re-establish the Interagency Forest Health team, identifying as a key task the development of a collaborative forest and rangeland health policy. This team will include State and Tribal members.

The Interagency Salvage Review team findings include several items related to forest health. Moving the policy forward will complement these findings, and demostrate Forest Service responsiveness.

Key People:

Dep. Sec., NRE, Jim Lyons; Dir. of Forest Health Protection, Ann Bartuska; Dir. of Timber Management, Dave Hessel; Dir. of Fire and Aviation Management, Mary Jo Lavin; State Forester of Washington, Chair of the NASF Forest Health Committee, Kaleen Cottingham; Interagency Forest Health Committee: BLM, William Torgersen; EPA, Dwight Atkinson, Anita Frankel, Robert Wolcott; NMBS, Lauri Sullivan; BIA, Len Stull; F&WS, Ronald Singer; NPS, Steve Botti and Tom Zimmerman

Wildland Fire Management

Summary of Issue: A long term funding solution ensuring adequate funding for preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction, and fire suppression.

Discussion: The Forest Service has had significant shortfalls in emergency fire suppression (averaging $200 million) for many years which have impacted other program accounts and caused much concern with Congress and the Administration. To meet fire suppression funding needs, funds from the Knutsen-Vandenberg (K-V) fund were borrowed and are not replenished

until supplemental funding was appropriated, or a Presidential declaration for use of contingency funds was issued. Due to this practice, the K-V fund was almost depleted in 1996 before the FY 1997 Appropriation Act provided additional funds for repayment. Similar funding concerns exist within U.S. Department of Interior (DOI).

The problem arises from the historic and expansive accumulation of hazardous fuels, with the resulting severe fire behavior leading to large suppression costs. Hazardous fuels reduction funding has been inadequate to address this problem. A long- term solution ensuring adequate funding is needed.

For FY 1998, both USDA and DOI Secretaries proposed to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that a permanent, indefinite appropriation be established to fund "Wildland Fire Operations." This proposal would provide a comprehensive approach to address the issues of fuels reduction and emergency suppression costs. Fire preparedness activities would continue to be included in each Forest Service's budget as a discretionary account. The proposal would:

1) Provide more funding for fire use operations (hazardous fuels reduction), in recognition of the need to integrate fire as a resource management tool;

2) Include mechanisms to guarantee a stable funding source when fire emergencies strike; and,

3) Fund fire preparedness activities at more efficient levels than in the immediate past.

This proposal would, over time, reduce large fire costs, while overall forest health would improve.

The FY 1998 OMB Passback Guidance did not reflect the proposal made by the Secretaries. Instead, it provides $211 million for wildland fire suppression and hazardous fuels reduction to be included in the existing Forest Service Wildland Fire Management account. Fuels reduction and fire suppression costs in excess of $211 million would have to be sought from a government-wide emergency contingency account. Although, the Forest Service continues to favor a permanent indefinite appropriation for all "operations" (emergency suppression and hazardous fuels reduction) the OMB Passback significantly improves the agency's capability to address the buildup of hazardous fuels and provides additional sources of funds for emergency fire suppression.

The OMB Passback also included funding for fire preparedness at $303.3 million, which is only 78 percent of the most efficient level (MEL) of fire protection capability identified by the National Fire Management Analysis System. MEL in FY 1998 is $390 million. Preparedness should be funded at 100 percent of MEL, however, Congress has appropriated preparedness funding at 95 percent of MEL in FY 1995, 88 percent in FY 1996, and 85 percent in FY 1997. The Forest Service appealed to the Department to raise funding for FY 1998 to 85 percent of MEL. At 78 percent of MEL, we will not be able to fund a fire organization to ensure public and firefighter safety, therefore, more acres will burn and total fire costs will increase.

Proposed Action: This brief is provided as information to prepare the Chief for potential discussions concerning the FY 1998 Forest Service budget with the Department, Department of Interior, OMB, or Congress.

* Subsequent fire suppression needs would be accommodated from a government-wide emergency contingency account, following appropriate documentation from USDA.

Key People:

Deputy Chief, Joan Comanor: Responsible for overall leadership of State and Private Forestry.

Director of Fire and Aviation Management, Mary Jo Lavin: Responsible for all activities in the Fire and Aviation program.

Director of Program Development & Budget, Steve Satterfield: Lead advisor and contact with Department, OGC, OMB and the Hill on budget matters.

Implement the President's Forest Plan

Significance: The Forest Service continues to implement the President's Forest Plan for the Pacific Northwest (Northwest Forest Plan) in cooperation with the BLM, USFWS, NPS, NMFS and the EPA. The plan encompasses 17 national forests in 3 States and BLM lands in Oregon and California. The plan has three major sections: (1) Sustainable forest management; (2) Economic assistance to communities, (3) and Interagency coordination.

Background:

* The Northwest Forest Plan provides a comprehensive package of initiatives designed to resolve the impasse between timber harvesting and other commodity production activities on Federal lands in the Pacific Northwest, and to protect noncommodity resources on these same lands. To implement the Northwest Forest Plan, the Forest Service emphasizes mandatory actions, including watershed assessments, supporting local economies through maximum feasible timber sales programs, working on adaptive management areas, and conducting essential planning and monitoring. In particular, high-priority actions such as rural community assistance and ecosystem restoration are emphasized.

* The Forest Service support for the Northwest Forest Plan effort includes performing watershed analyses, continuing work in adaptive management areas (AMA's), facilitating ecosystem restorations, and implementing the planning and monitoring efforts required by the plan.

* It was originally estimated that, when fully implemented, the President's PNW Forest plan would produce 1.053 billion board feet (bbf) of timber from national forests and 0.221 bbf from BLM lands. The current figure is sightly lower than original estimates--specific plan revisions in Region 5 indicated those forests could not produce at program levels initially estimated. In 1994, the Chief testified that implementation of the plan would occur over a 4-year period with 40

percent achievement in FY 1994, 60 percent in FY 1995, 80 percent in FY 1996, and 100 percent in FY 1997. The Forest Service produced 64 percent of the plan volume in FY 1995 and is on schedule to produce the 80 percent in FY 1996.

* Concerns about the timber sale volume are likely to come from timber industry interests and the Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations.* Funding from the President's Forest Plan Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative totalled over 13.5 million dollars in FY 1996. Over 80 percent of the dollars for Forest Service watershed restoration "Jobs-in-the-Woods" efforts were directly awarded to contractors and workers in timber dependent communities. As part of the Jobs-in-the-Woods program, displaced timber workers were employed on 300 watershed restoration contracts. This did require a Secretarial Waiver to limit advertising of these contracts to the affected communities. A Secretarial Waiver will not be needed in 1997 as Congress provided authorization to limit Jobs-in-the-Woods contract competition in 1997 in the Appropriations Bill (Section 329).

Actions to Date:

No comments re/Research in spite fall the Att'y Report.

Issued the Record of Decision for the President's Forest Plan for the Pacific Northwest on April 13, 1994.

Funded over 450 community projects under the Rural Community Assistance Program.

Implemented 10 "Jobs in the Woods" demonstration projects.

Established 13 chartered advisory committees to coordinate implementation of Northwest Forest Plans.

Provided over 1.2 billion board feet of timber from National Forests.

Completed over 200 watershed analyses.

Prepared assessments for 37 Late-Succesionnal Reserves.

Streamlined the consultation process required under the Endangered Species Act.

Interested Parties: President, Congress, other Federal agencies, State governments, user groups, interested organizations, and individuals.

Implement Salvage Provisions, Rescission Act

Significance: On July 27, 1995 the President signed the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19), which contained provisions for an emergency salvage timber sale program as well as for "Option 9" and "318" sales. The salvage provisions of the Act were intended to expedite salvage timber sales in order to achieve, to the maximum extent feasible, a salvage sale volume above the programmed level to reduce the backlogged volume of salvage timber. The authorities provided by P.L. 104-19 expired on December 31, 1996. President Clinton directed the Secretaries of Agriculture, the Interior, and Commerce, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection

Agency, and the heads of other appropriate agencies to move forward to implement the timber salvage provisions of P.L. 104-19 in an expeditious and environmentally-sound manner, in accordance with the President's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan, other existing forest and land management policies and plans, and existing environmental laws, except those procedural actions expressly prohibited by Public Law 104-19. The involved agencies entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to accomplish this objective.

The interagency MOA has been the guiding direction in implementing the salvage provisions of the Act in an environmentally sound manner, but the lack of public recourse in the form of administrative appeals and truncated litigation rights has fueled controversy over the program. Along with the MOA direction, the Secretary issued further direction in July 1996 regarding those sales that could be sold using the authorities of the Act. Subsequent internal Forest Service reviews were completed to assure that all sales sold under the Act met the direction. In addition an interagency review of the program was conducted and indicated general compliance with the MOA direction. However, problems were noted and an action plan to address those problems is being developed.

Section 318 of the FY 1990 Appropriations Act, set specific timber sale objectives for the Forest Service and the BLM in Oregon and Washington, and prescribed measures for protecting the northern spotted owl and ecologically significant old-growth forests. Section 318 set the timber sale program for the Pacific Northwest Region at 7.7 billion board feet for FY 1989-1990. During the harvest of these sales, the marbled murrelet, a Pacific coast sea bird that uses coastal old growth Douglas-fir for nesting habitat, was listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened. This delayed the harvest of some of the Section 318 timber sales.
The FY 1995 Rescissions Act ordered the release of all remaining "Section 318" timber sales where threatened or endangered birds are not known to nest. The Act requires alternative volume be offered where original sales cannot proceed. Litigation over specific interpretations of the Act continues to be ongoing. In September 1996, the Department of Justice (DOJ) negotiated a settlement with the timber purchasers regarding the preparation of replacement timber for the sales that would affect nesting threatened and endangered bird species. The Forest Service is currently implementing that agreement. This litigation is often a topic of discussion at the weekly Tuesday timber meetings at the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Interested Parties: President, Congress (especially the committees with oversight responsibilities of the Forest Service), other federal agencies, timber industry, environmental groups, interested organizations, and individuals. Congressional members who have shown a particular interest in this topic include: Sen. Craig (R-ID), Sen. Hatfield (R-OR), Sen. Lugar (R-IN), Sen. Leahy (D-VT), Sen. Stevens (R-AK), Sen. Gorton (R-WA), Sen. Burns (R-MT), Sen. Johnston (D-LA), Sen. Bumpers (D-AR), Sen. Murray (D-WA), Sen. Cochran (R-MS), Sen. Thomas (R-WY), Cong. Young (R-AK), Cong. Hansen (R-UT), Cong. Doolittle (R-CA), Cong. Pombo (R-CA), Cong. Hayworth (R-AZ), Cong. Cremeans (R-OH), Cong. Cubin (R-WY), Cong. Cooley (R-OR, chairman of Salvage Task Force), Cong. Chenoweth (R-ID, Vice-chair of Salvage Task Force), Cong. Radanovich (R-CA), Cong. Hastings (R-WA), Cong. Metcalf (R-WA), Cong. Longley (R-ME), Cong. Shadegg (R-AZ), Cong. Miller (D-CA), Cong. Vento (D-MN), Cong. Kildee (D-MI), Cong. Williams (D-MT), Cong. Riggs (R-CA), Cong. Herger (R-CA), Cong. Taylor (R-NC), Cong. Furse (D-OR), Cong. Skaggs (D-CO), Cong. Vucanovich (R-NV), Cong. Clinger (R-PA), Cong. Dicks (D-WA).

Actions to Date:

Consistent with the President's direction, an interagency Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on timber salvage was developed.

The purpose of the MOA is to reaffirm the commitment of the signatory agencies to continue their compliance with the requirements of existing environmental law while carrying out the objectives of the timber salvage related activities authorized by P.L. 104-19. In fulfilling this commitment, the parties intend to build upon on-going efforts to streamline procedures for environmental analysis and interagency consultation and cooperation. Interagency collaboration is vital to achieving this purpose.

Secretary Glickman reported to House Speaker Gingrich that he hoped to achieve 4.5 billion board feet (plus or minus 25 percent). At the end of FY 1995, we were slightly ahead of schedule. As a result of delaying some sales to comply with the Secretary's July 2, 1996 directive, we offered 92 percent of the originally anticipated volume in FY 1996. The final total offer volumes for the period of FY 1995 through first quarter 1997 will be within the 25 percent range specified by the Secretary.

Several lawsuits have been filed against timber salvage sale actions to date. The courts are following the judicial process as outlined in the Rescission bill.

Along with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Office of Management and Budget, the Forest Service participated in an interagency review of the salvage timber sale program. Results of that review have been published and provided to the Administration, Congress, and the public.

Pursuant to court orders and Section 2001 (k) of the Rescissions act, the Forest Service has released 32 (Section 318) timber sales (119 mmbf) to date. An additional 72 sales (316 mmbf) are pending resolution of appeals.

Additional Actions For Deputy Under Secretarial Consideration:

Support and protect the legal discretion of the Secretary to make policy and decisions related to timber sales.

Participate in developing and implementing action items to address issues raised in the interagency salvage program review.

Continue implementation of the replacement volume settlement agreement with purchasers and seek the additional funding necessary to complete this work.

Ski Fee Bill Implementation

Summary of Issue: The Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, P.L. 104-333, was signed into law on November 12, 1996. A portion of this bill, Title VII, Section 701,

commonly referred to as the "ski fee bill", revises existing procedures for determining permit fees for many of the 137 ski areas on National Forest System Lands. In addition, it sets direction for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance on permit (re-)issuances and withdraws all ski areas from mineral activities.

Key Players and Our Relationship with Them: The Forest Service has been working closely with the National Ski Area Association (NSAA). Michael Berry, President, and Sam Anderson, Director of Environmental Affairs, have collaborated with us to develop an implementation strategy that will be efficient and effective for both the Forest Service and ski areas. Stephen Hodapp, Legislative Staff for the National Parks, Forest, and Lands Subcommittee, worked with the NSAA and the Forest Service to finalize wording of the bill. Mr. Hodapp also involved the Office of Management and Budget in wording of the financial portions of the bill. The Forest Service has worked closly with the staff of Under Secretary Jim Lyons on all phases of this rulemaking.

Budget: There are no funds associated with implementing this administrative change. All levels of the organization are and will be absorbing the implementation costs over the next few years. In addition to salary, it will cost approximately $30,000 in travel to implement the program this year. Once ski areas have switched to the new system, costs of administering ski area fee systems should decrease due to decreased auditing and simplified procedures.

Issue:

Key Points of the Bill:
Fee associated:
o Based on Fair Market Value.
o Streamlines fee system, easier & less costly to administer.
o Eliminates need for Forest Service audits.
o 1986 ski act permits are subject to new system. Other permittees choose new fee system, or stay with Graduated Rate Fee System (GRFS).
o Allows a 5 year phase-in period.
o Revenue driven: Total fees are a summation of applying the Adjusted Gross Revenue to each revenue bracket:

(A) 1.5 % of all AGR below $3 million.
(B) 2.5 % of all AGR between $3-15 million.
(C) 2.75% of all AGR between $15-50 million.
(D) 4.0 % of all AGR above $50 million.

o Monitoring to ensure Fair Market Value is being met.

Administrative associated:

* Mineral Withdrawals. Subject to valid existing rights, all lands located within the boundaries of existing and future ski area permits are automatically withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry (includes geothermal). If permit terminates, withdrawal is cancelled.

* National Environmental Policy Act. Sets direction for NEPA requirements for permit (re-)issuance. (Subsection (i) states: "...activities similar in nature and amount to the activities provided under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action...")

Progress: The Forest Service is moving toward a March 1997 rulemaking. Draft policy documents, strategies, and implementation schedules have been completed. The Forest Service is working with the NSAA to develop a program to implement the fee system that is cost efficient and effective for the Forest Service and the ski areas.

Benefits Expected:

* Simplification of accounting for both permittee and Forest Service. Increased consistency in permit administration. Decreased costs for permittee to meet permit standards and for Forest Service to administer permits for those who switch to new fee system. Elimination of the need for audits of ski area assets, a costly and complex job for the Forest Service and permit holders alike.

* Reduction in administrative costs to issue permits when activities are similar in nature and kind to existing permitted activities, by streamlining the NEPA process.

* Reduction in administrative costs to process mineral withdrawals individually by blanketing the withdrawal.

Remaining Issues or Problems: For the most part the bill is clear, and requires no discretionary authority of the Forest Service. Several parts, however, need clarification or implementing language and involve some interpretation or discretion on the part of the Forest Service.

Fee Phase-In: Discussions with internal and external parties reveal different interpretations of the phase-in. The Forest Service is currently deliberating this issue. The agency is seeking information from ski industry organizations, the Department of Agriculture, and OMB to interpret and propose a policy for phase-in of new fees. This portion likely will not need public comment because it effects a distinct identifiable group.

National Environmental Policy Act: Wording in the Bill could be interpreted to mean (re-)issuances are either exempt from consideration under NEPA, or that they are exempt from an EIS, but would require a Categorical Exclusion. The Forest Service is deliberating this issue. This portion of the policy making may need public comment.

The Forest Service is seeking guidance from Congress on the intent for implementation of NEPA language of the Bill. A letter has been submitted to the Department for signature requesting this guidance.

Mineral Withdrawals: The Forest Service is considering reserving the right for the permittee to utilize common variety mineral material found within the permit area to maintain or enhance the area. This policy adjustment may also require public comment.

Priorities for Modest Funding: $20,000-$50,000 will be needed in Fiscal Years 1997-2000 to convert existing permits to new fee system. The sooner implementation occurs, the more

efficient. This Bill requires implementation of the new fee system begin with fees from the 1995/1996 ski season.

Important Contacts: Under Secretary Jim Lyons is the most important contact. Under Secretary Lyons takes personal interest in this Bill, and has great knowledge of the Bill. Ski Areas are of general interest to him.

Improve Rangeland Health

One of the earliest manifestations of ecosystem management in the Forest Service was the Change on the Range initiative. Begun in 1989, Change on the Range is based on sustaining the health and productivity of rangeland ecosystems. The Forest Service is committed to the concept and continues to identify elements that characterize rangeland health and to apply management that achieves and maintains a healthy state.

Significance: Nearly half of all NFS lands are within the boundaries of grazing allotments, with additional rangelands occurring outside of allotments. Any management strategy applied to such vast acreages of public lands, especially strategies based on new concepts, are likely to be challenged on many fronts. Some of our most pressing current challenges are as follows:

Riparian Management - The presence of livestock in riparian habitats continues to be a contentious issue. Although improving riparian conditions has been a program priority for some time, many groups and individuals feel that improvement is not adequate or not happening fast enough. The Forest Service has redoubled it's efforts, in cooperation with BLM, by instituting a joint FS/BLM Riparian Service Team. The team assists field units by providing training and technical assistance on determining proper functioning condition for riparian habitats and development of management strategies. Despite this effort, the U.S. District Court in Oregon recently ruled that the FS could not issue grazing permits until a certificate of compliance with Sec. 401 of the Clean Water Act was obtained from the State. Previously, Sec. 401 compliance had only been applied to point source pollution.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species - Like riparian issues, resolving conflicts between livestock and T&E species is, and has been, a program priority. The objective remains to focus our management on healthy rangeland ecosystems rather than a single species of plant or animal, T&E or otherwise. Some of our greatest challenges develop as new listings occur and Biological Opinions are issued which require monitoring that exceeds normal program expectations. Such additional work appears to reduce the cost effectiveness of the program. In fact, benefits go beyond the range program and new means of coordinating efforts to monitor ESA compliance will be explored. We anticipate further challenges, particularly in the Southwestern and Pacific Southwestern Regions due to their many micro-climates conducive to uncommon species.

Invasive and Noxious Weeds - Alien species issues have been steadily gaining interest and awareness among the environmental community, recreational enthusiasts and industry. There has been increasing concern and alarm that Federal lands are a major source of weed infestations which spread onto adjacent lands. With rising costs of treatments and curtailed use of pesticides, the FS faces a challenge of devoting enough resources to controlling existing weed populations while still reacting at early stages to new infestations and instituting prevention and education

activities. FS membership on the Federal interagency committee on weeds to foster coordination, and subsequent development of USDA and FS Noxious Weed strategies have provided opportunities to initiate partnerships to manage weeds across jurisdictional boundaries with a long-range vision. The National Strategy for Invasive Plant Management (near completion) and the implementation program of Pulling Together Partnerships have begun to convince our skeptical partners that the FS is serious about weed management on NFS lands. These partnerships will translate into better environmental management and more cordial relationships with adjacent neighbors.

Livestock grazing can serve a demonstrated, positive role in the ecology and dynamics of those ecosystems where it is permitted. However, the Forest Service must actively manage the pattern, season and intensity of grazing to improve or sustain the health of rangeland ecosystems.

Interested Parties: Congress, Livestock industry, National Cattlemen's Association, American Farm Bureau, Public Lands Council, environmental groups such as National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council, and sportsman's organizations such as Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Trout Unlimited.

Actions to Date:

Established FS-BLM National Riparian Service Team to assist field units in management of riparian areas.

FS was lead agency in developing National and USDA Noxious Weed strategies in partnership with other Federal agencies. Initiated Pulling Together Partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and USDOI for weed management areas with boundary neighbors. Assisted Region 3 and FWS in developing a final schedule for completing Section 7 consultation on 63 listed species in Region 3. The final schedule was signed by FS and FWS on 11/8/96.

Additional Actions for Consideration:

Continue to seek support for funding ($45 million) contained in the FY 98 Agency request. Despite the pressing problems in management of rangeland ecosystems, for FY 96 Congress appropriated the Forest Service only 61 percent ($27 million) of the FY 94 appropriation of $44.1 million. For FY1997 Congress has appropriated only 86 percent ($38 million) of the FY 1994 appropriation. The FS cannot meet it's obligations for stewardship of rangeland ecosystems at these decreased funding levels.

New National Forest Management Act Planning Regulations

Significance: The planning regulations at 36 CFR 219 set forth requirements to implement NFMA by planning for National Forest System lands. The existing regulations were adopted on September 30, 1982. The Forest Service has completed the development of the first round of forest plans as required by NFMA. Now, most of them are scheduled for revision soon (refer to the Plan Revision briefing paper for details). The planning process would be more efficient and effective if the new regulations were issued.

Actions to Date:

* In 1989, the Forest Service conducted a comprehensive review of its land management planning process, in cooperation with the Conservation Foundation, the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources of Purdue University, and others. This critique involved over 3,500 people, both within and outside the Forest Service.

* In 1991, the Forest Service published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR). Based largely on the findings of the Critique of Land Management Planning, this ANPR included preliminary regulatory text completely revising the existing planning regulations. Over 600 groups and individual submitted written comments. These comments were used in the development of a proposed rule.

* On April 13, 1995, the proposed planning rule was published. It was designed to achieve four goals:

(1) to streamline planning procedures and forest plans;
(2) to strengthen relationships with the public and other Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments;
(3) to incorporate the principles of ecosystem management; and
(4) to clarify the Forest Service's planning and decisionmaking framework.

* Public briefings on the proposed rule were held in 17 locations around the country on in 1995, and by the end of the public comment period, 1,035 public responses were received.

* The Forest Service has evaluated the public comments on the proposed rule and has prepared a final rule for publication. Final approval is pending in the Department and the Office of Management and Budget.

Employee Morale: Since the publication of the Proposed Regulations in 1995, planning personnel at the field level have been anxiously awaiting the new planning regulations, although candidly, by now they generally don't believe that new regulations will ever be released. They are aware that the new regulations would make planning more efficient and effective. Timing is critical to the field as over two-thirds of the forest plans will be in some stage of revision in the next 18 months.

Interested Parties: Congressional committees with jurisdiction over Forest Service matters; USDA and other departments and agencies with responsibilities related to those of the Forest Service (USDI, CEQ, EPA, NOAA, NMFS); state, local and tribal governments; environmental groups; industry organizations; forest user groups; academia; and persons who have been active in the forest planning process and the implementation of forest plans.

Key Forest Service Personnel: Chris Risbrudt-Director EMC Staff, Dave Barone-NFMA Regulations Program Manager EMC Staff.

Tongass National Forest

Sub Issue-Tongass Land Management Plan:

* The Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) was the first plan completed after the passage of NFMA. Revision efforts have been underway since 1987, but significant legislated changes in the Tongass Timber Reform Act (1990) and the emergence of new resource information, (including questions relating to wildlife habitat to ensure species viability, fish habitat protection measures, cave and karst management, alternatives to clearcutting, and social and economic impacts on communities) have required extensive additional analyses and public involvement.

* In 1994, the Alaska Region formed a partnership with the Pacific Northwest Research Station to ensure the plan would be scientifically credible and lead to sustainable resource management. Also, staff from other Federal agencies assisted on team and served on policy group.

* In April 1996, the draft revised TLMP was released for public comment. The preferred alternative identified an average annual ASQ of 357 mmbf, of which 297 mmbf is projected to be economically feasible. Over 30,000 comments were submitted during the entire revision process were received by August 26. The final decision is expected to be signed early in 1997.

* Recent developments in the courts that remanded the USFWS determinations not to list the Queen Charlotte goshawk and the Alexander Archipelago wolf as endangered back to the USFWS -- could affect Tongass management and the TLMP. The protective measures outlined in the final TLMP revision could affect whether or not these species are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Sub Issue-Negotiations with Ketchikan Pulp Company (KPC):

* Chairman Murkowski put a hold on Senate consideration of the Omnibus Lands bill at the close of the 104th Congress to encourage the White House to enter into discussions with KPC to address outstanding contract liabilities and to arrive at a mutual termination or modification of the long-term contract. Negotiations were conducted between the Senator and Chief of Staff Leon Paneta. The agreement struck was the government would supply KPC with about 300 MMBF of timber to keep two KPC sawmills (Ketchikan and Metlakatla) running for 2 years. Negotiations continue between the government and KPC.

Sub Issue-Helicopter Landings in Tongass Wilderness Areas:

* Whether to authorize landings at specific locations where use was established prior to designation of areas as Wilderness is being reviewed under Section 1110 of ANILCA and Section 4(d) of the Wilderness Act. A draft EIS was released for public comment in May. The draft preferred alternative proposes helicopter landings by the general public at 129 specific locations where such use was established prior to the designation of these areas as wilderness. The public comment was largely opposed to any helicopter landings in wilderness. The final decision is expected early in 1997.

Sub Issue-Southeast Alaska Economic Fund:

* P.L. 104-134, the Balanced Budget Down Payment Act II, established the Southeast Alaska Economic Fund. The President triggered the Fund by suspending subsections 325 (a) and (b) of the Act, which mandated an ASQ for the Tongass. The $110 million Fund is to be delivered to eligible communities of Southeast Alaska over 4 years in the form of direct payments to offset anticipated lost timber sale receipts and allow further economic development and employment in the heavily impacted timber communities in Southeast Alaska. All communities eligible have received their payments for FY 1996 and FY1997 totaling about $70 million.

Sub Issue-Litigation:

1. Alaska Pulp Corporation (APC): Following the termination of their long-term timber sale contract after closure of the APC Sitka pulp mill, APC filed a claim against the Government for breach of contract. The Court of Federal Claims case is currently in the discovery phase. Damages claimed total about $1.6 billion.

2. Ketchikan Pulp Corporation (KPC): KPC is in litigation with the Forest Service in several Court of Federal Claims suits concerning changes made to their long-term contract subsequent to the Tongass Timber Reform Act and other contract disputes. Challenges concern rate adjustments, appraisals, stumpage determination, and contract timber volume. Claims against the Government total approximately $500 million. Settlement negotiations regarding these suits have been proceeding in conjunction with discussions regarding the KPC pulp mill closure and orderly termination of the KPC contract.

3. Wolf/Goshawk: Environmental groups filed lawsuits challenging the determinations by the USFWS not to list the Queen Charlotte goshawk and the Alexander Archipelago wolf as endangered or threatened in Southeast Alaska under the Endangered Species Act. The Federal district court has remanded the determinations not to list back to the USFWS for them to consider the current management strategies to protect both species' habitat. The USFWS is expected to complete remand determinations by June 1997.

4. TRA Proportional Harvest Methodology with the Wildlife Society and other litigants: Three lawsuits over this methodology have recently been settled, with the issuance of a Forest Service Handbook Supplement update incorporating a transition to improved methodology.

5. Environmental Challenges to Timber Sale Projects: Four separate lawsuits brought by various groups, individuals, and Alaska Native tribal governments are currently pending againstparticular Tongass timber sale projects. The suits allege various violations of NEPA, NFMA, ANILCA section 810 subsistence analysis and finding requirements, and other laws. No injunctions have been issued, but the Forest Service has voluntarily delayed offering sales scheduled for the current year while litigation on the merits proceeds. The total timber volume in issue in these suits is about 360 million board feet and comprises a substantial portion of the projected Tongass timber sale program over the next several years.

California Spotted Owl-Sierra Nevada Research Project (SNEP) and the Federal Advisory Committee

Significance: The Federal Advisory Committee is being established to insure that the best science on the Sierra Nevada ecosystem has been fully integrated into the California spotted owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Actions to Date:

* The SNEP report was commissioned by Congress in 1993 to "conduct a scientific review of the remaining old growth in the national forests of the Sierra Nevada in California and for a study of the entire Sierra Nevada ecosystem by an independent panel of scientists."

* On September 4, 1996, the Under Secretary for NRE Jim Lyons, requested the establishment of a Federal advisory committee to review and evaluate how the preliminary revised DEIS for the California spotted owl integrated the information from SNEP and other scientific information.

* In November, the Forest Service published a Federal Register Notice inviting nominations for the Federal advisory committee. We have received over 80 names of interested nominees from the Notice, Departmental recommendations, and environmental and timber industry groups. The Ecosystem Management Coordination staff is contacting all of the individuals to determine if they are interested in participating in the advisory committee. All non-federal nominees have to complete a Department of Agriculture background check. These background checks have to be completed prior to selection of the advisory committee members.

Current Status: The Charter for the California Spotted Owl Federal Advisory Committee is in the Secretary's office awaiting his signature. The Charter states that "the focus of the committee will be to ensure that the preliminary revised DEIS represents complete integration and analysis of all available significant information relevant to the management of National Forest System lands as part of the Sierra Nevada ecosystem within the context of NFMA, NEPA, and other relevant laws."

The advisory committee will consist of no more than 10 members and a Committee Chair appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Representatives of the Forest Service team which prepared the DEIS, as well as other Forest Service resource specialists and scientists, will be made available to serve as consultants for the review. The estimated operating costs of the advisory committee are $250,000.

Opportunity: The Forest Service will identify the preferred nominees and forward the entire list of names to the Secretary of Agriculture. This will be one of the first chances for the new Chief to indicate what kind of committee he would prefer to evaluate the California spotted owl strategy. The Secretary will make the final selections for membership on the advisory committee.

Key Forest Service Personnel: Jonathan Stephens and Geraldine Bower, EMC Staff

Status of Forest Plan Revisions

Significance: NFMA specifies that every National Forest needs to have a land and resource management plan (LRMP) also known as a Forest Plan. The purpose of the LRMP is to guide all natural resource management activities of a National Forest for a 10-15 year period. It establishes management standards and guidelines for each National Forest; describes resource management practices, levels of resource production and management and the availability and suitability of lands for resource management; and provides direction to assure coordination of multiple-uses (outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness) and sustained yield of products and services.

Background: Under the requirements of the existing rule, revision of a forest plan should occur about every 10 years, and no later than 15 years, after approval of the original plan or latest plan revision. For the first round of Forest planning, all of the National Forests has completed their plans during mid-1980's and mid-1990's, and are now beginning to revise them.

Actions to date:

* Several national forests have completed their forest plan revisions. These are the George Washington National Forest (January 1993), Francis Marion National Forest (April 1996), National Forests in Texas (July 1996), Rio Grande National Forest (December 1996). The Black Hills National Forest has released the revised plan in December 1996, issuance of the Record of Decision will be in February 1997.

Current issues:

* The Tongass National Forest completed the original land management plan in 1979 and began the revision process in 1987. Ten years later, the Record of Decision still has not been signed.

* Under the requirements of existing planning regulations, many Forest plans are due for formal revisions in next 5 years. For example, there are 80 Forest plans (65 percent of 124) are due for revision between 1998 and 2002. This situation may cause significant problems in scheduling, workload assignments and funding the revision tasks over the next planning cycle.

Key Forest Service Personnel: Key WO contacts are Chris Risbrudt-EM Staff Director and Bob Breazeale-Assistant Director for NFMA/Appeals

CERCLA/RCRA Hazardous Waste Cleanups

Summary of Issues:

* Funding HazWaste activities with FS appropriations in addition to the USDA Central Account HazWaste appropriation.

* Resolving confusion over Abandoned Mine inventory and CERCLA inventory, and clarifying program overlap.

* FS has not met with Brian Burke on his August 3, 1996, proposal for a hazardous waste cleanup initiative with emphasis on payment by responsible parties.

Discussion: Since FY 1988, USDA agencies funded priority HazWaste work under CERCLA/RCRA from a HazWaste Central Account in the Agriculture appropriation, supplemented by funding or work by responsible parties or cooperators. As part of a proposed program increase by the Department, the FS requested $27 million in FY 1996. OMB passback included the increase in the Central Account, but the Department diverted the proposed increase to meet other USDA priorities, directing agencies to cover the reduced Central Account funds with Forest Service funds. Because the Interior Appropriations Committee did not include HazWaste in the FS appropriations, there were no additional FS funds authorized for this work, although $2.3 Mil. of watershed work in FY 1996 also included HazWaste work. Department-FS relationships were strained over this issue. FY 1997 planning include requesting Interior Committee reprogramming for FY 1997, and proposing a new budget category for FY 1998 and beyond. OMB disapproved the new FS budget category and increased the Agriculture Central Account budget. How much of the increase will come to the FS, and whether or not the FS will be allowed to supplement the Central Account with FS funds are still unclear.

There is confusion over just what is included in the "HazWaste" program. The abandoned and inactive mine (AIM) inventory will include some mine sites with releases of CERCLA hazardous substances. The FS AIM inventory is nearly complete and should be completed in FY 1998. Approximately 1,700 AIMs out of an estimated total of 38,000 sites may warrant further evaluation as potential CERCLA sites including injury to natural resources. AIM sites vary greatly in size and complexity, and many are complicated by mixed ownership. Some remaining AIMs will require additional actions for non-hazardous impacts on water quality and physical hazards to public safety. The Department has questioned the number of AIMs that may be evaluated as potential CERCLA sites. Other CERCLA sites include landfills, old wood treating sites, and pesticide disposal sites. We understand that the Department feels the FS is reluctant to pursue potentially responsible parties. An emerging issue is the Western Governors proposal for a watershed-wide approach to AIM cleanup.

Brian Burke's August 3, 1996 memo to the Chief requested a meeting with the FS leadership to discuss a FS HazWaste cleanup initiative with an emphasis on performance or payment by responsible parties. At the October FS National Leadership Conference, Mr. Burke addressed all his comments to the importance of the HazWaste program and the priority for performance or payment by the responsible parties. Although a number of "initiative" proposals have been drafted, some of which may have even been seen by Mr. Burke, a meeting to discuss the proposal has not yet taken place.

Proposed Actions: Schedule a meeting the week of January 20 with Brian Burke for Chief, Janice McDougle, Steve Satterfield, and Skip Coghlan to discuss an aggressive initiative to have a national team finalize the AIM inventory with preliminary identification of CERCLA sites, and to orient all Regional leadership teams on overall program goals and responsibilities for seeking performance or payment by responsible parties. Move quickly to implement the results of this meeting.

1. The preliminary FY 1998 Central Account estimate was $7.5 million, and the FS proposed $7.0 milion. in a new appropriation category. The OMB passback did not include the FS proposal and increased the Central Account. It is unclear if all the increase will come to the FS or be shared among USDA agenices. Future FS funding is unclear without an appropriation line item.
2. Estimate. Expect significant FY 1997 agreements from ongoing negotiations, including estimated value of work performed by others.
3. As directed by FS appropriations language, a reprogramming request of benefitting function funds has been drafted for Committee approval, but has not yet been approved. Authorization for an additional $5.0 million has also been proposed.

Key People:

Dep. Under Sec., NRE, Brian Burke: High personal interest as past environmental. enforcement attorney with the Department of Justice. Has proposed a FS initiative.

ADC, NFS, Janice McDougle: NFS lead contact for Abandoned Mine, CERCLA, Clean Water Act and natural Resource Damage Recovery.

Dir. of Program Development & Budget, Steve Satterfield: Lead advisor and contact with Department, OGC, OMB and the Hill on budget matters.

Acting Dir. of Eng., Skip Coghlan (with Program Mgrs. Harry Kringler & Karen Solari): Responsible for Environmental Engineering, CERCLA, RCRA and Federal Facilities Compliance Programs.

Dir. of Minerals & Geology, Larry Gadt: Responsible for all mining related operating plans, and associated public health and safety.

Dir. of Watershed & Air Mgt., Art Bryant (with Program Mgr. Russ Lafayette): Responsible for soil, water and air impacts of mining and other hazardous materials activities, e.g., landfills or wood treatment sites.

Ass't Sec for Admin, Wardell Townsend: Administers the Department Hazardous Waste program and Central Account.

Blake Velde: While administratively assigned to the FS Dir. of Engineering, works directly for Ass't Sec. Townsend, providing HazWaste direction and oversight to all USDA agencies.

Bettina Poirier: OGC Dep. Asst. Gen. Counsel, Natural Resources Division, firm interest in "polluter pays." Works directly with Dep. Under Sec. Burke.

Terry Harwood: Ass't Dir of Engineering in R-4, previously FS WO CERCLA, etc. ,program manager. Has worked directly with Brian Burke on New World Mine and similar issues. Recently given a temporary promotion to fill a proposed GS-15 position stack-graded with Velde to provide FS field assistance in working with potentially responsible parties.

Organizational Effectiveness
(Collaborative Stewardship)

Support Public Land and Private Entrepreneurship

Significance: With a decreasing budget and aging infrasture, the Forest Service must seek private entrepreneurships along with Congressional assistance to meet the public demand for high quality public facilities while protecting the resources. National forest recreation demands are at an all time high; Resources Planning Act research projects a 50 percent increase by 2040. The NFS provides about 43 percent of the recreational use of Federal land.

Recreation on NFS lands includes opportunities to experience diverse recreational activities across the 191 million-acre system and for the operation and maintenance of developed and dispersed recreation facilities and services to support and accommodate these activities. Developed facilities alone include 4,389 campgrounds, over 328 swimming areas, 1,496 picnic grounds, 1,222 boating sites, 277 interpretive sites, fishing sites, winter recreation sites, trailheads, playgrounds and parks, and observation sites with a total capacity of accommodating over 1.8 million people at one time. Of particular concern are sites and facilities near large population centers that receive high levels of use on a year-round basis. Many of the recreation facilities were constructed in the 1930's and 1960's, and about 27 percent are more than 40 years old. In 1994, recreation facilities received over 835 million visits in 1994. The NFS contains over 124,600 miles of trails.

One-third of the ski areas in the United States are wholly or partially located on NFS lands and include most of the major winter sports resorts, which pay over $15 million in land use fees. A recent GAO audit reflected $1.2 billion dollars in total retail sales, a significant contribution to local economies, yet local economies and tourism in nearby communities decline as national forest facilities become unusable and are closed. The Forest Service issues and administers permits to private sector recreation entrepreneurs to provide outdoor recreation on NFS lands. These concession operations and facilities include ski areas, organization camps, lodges and resorts, and outfitters and guides.

Forest Service recreation managers are also responsible for wilderness, dispersed recreation, cave management, wild and scenic rivers, scenic byways, interpretive services, tourism, reservations system, and planning to meet NFMA and NEPA guidelines.

Interested Parties: Congress, Reps. Jim Hansen and Ralph Regula; nongovernmental organizations such as American Recreation Coalition, National Recreational Vehicle Association, Good Sam Club, American Association of Retired Persons; User Groups; and individuals.

Actions to Date:

Expand use of private capital to construct new or rehabilitate existing Forest Service facilities in often unique recreation settings where much of this country's recreation takes place but for which there are no appropriated funds. The Forest Service contributes by providing land, existing facilities, or infrastructure for the venture in a public land recreation setting, and the

entrepreneur modernizes existing facilities to meet health, safety, and accessibility concerns. The private sector has the opportunity to realize a reasonable profit, and the local economy benefits.

Phase out sites that receive lower use, have high costs to operate and maintain, and have negative affects on ecosystems.

Continue to develop a Recreation Site Concessionaire Desk Guide in order to provide for consistent application of law and regulation in the operation and maintenance of recreation facilities, achieve a common understanding of the benefits of the concession program, and internally raise the competence level of personnel administering concession special-use permits. Use of concessionaires reduces the overall level of recreation use collections returned to the U.S. Treasury, yet provides vital unfunded operation and maintenance of the recreation facilities under permit to the concessionaires.

Seek enhanced fee collection and retention authority for site operation as a legislative solution to assist in addressing the funding shortfall. Use the "demonstration" authorities in the 1996 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill for collecting and retaining recreation use fees in areas not allowed under current Land and Water Conservation Fund Act authorities. the purpose of the demonstration authority is to test many different methods of establishing, collecting, reinvesting recreation use fees and monitoring the public's acceptance of the increased costs. Collection and retention of fees will be a move toward the recovery of recreation use cost.

By 1997, expand recreation reservation system into an interagency reservation system. Currently and for the past several years, the Forest Service has made available to the public a national reservation system for recreation sites. The demand has often exceeded the constractor's ability to process requests for reservations during peak periods of use.

Continue with the linked data systems now in place that give the Forest Service credible data at both the field and headquarters level. The two systems are infrastructure, a software program designed to store data, and Meaningful Measures, a recreation resources management system that addresses not only the management of facilities and services, but establishes quality management of such facilities.

Increase numbers of cooperative activities by using cost-share agreements, volunteer arrangements, and other transactions with our "partners." More than 8,400 agreements and relationships have been developed providing a variety of services, facilities, and ecosystem investments. Many of these activities have generated over twice the returns for the Federal investment.

Establish guidelines for this broad program area in order to ensure it does not exceed its legal limits and further define its relationship with the National Forest Foundation (NFF).

Additional Actions for Chief's Consideration:

Congressional, legislative, and regulatory assistance and support will be sought at times to bring programs into action.

Strategic Planning

Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA)

Issue Summary: In the Forest Service, strategic thinking and development of long-term goals and strategies are continuous, adaptive processes. The Secretary of Agriculture has committed to deliver a strategic plan for the Forest Service to the 105th Congress. Preparation of the strategic plan document is about to begin. The issue is how to ensure the content of the prepared document is acceptable to Chief Dombeck

Key Players: The key planers in strategic thinking and planning processes include the Resources Program and Assessment (RPA) Staff, the National Leadership Team (NLT), members of the National Leadership Conference (RF&Ds), USDA-NRE, the Office Management and Budget, external organizations and individuals, State Foresters, and their staffs, and certain Members of Congress and their staffs.

The RPA Staff facilities our strategic thinking and planning processes, overseeing development of national resource assessments, gathering information, bringing stakeholders' perspectives to the attention of top management, and facilitating top management's consideration of long-term policy and program concerns. The RPA Staff is assisted in its efforts by designated program and unit coordinators throughout the Washington Office and field organization. National resource assessments are a joint responsibility between the RPA Staff and Research (FIERR Staff).

The NLT is the focal point for decisions. Information is routinely shared with RF&Ds, USDA-NRE, and staff contacts within the Forest Service. Consultation with RF&Ds and with USDA-NRE is ongoing and focused on critical issues. Public comment was formally sought between October 1995 and May 1996 on a draft strategic plan. Congressional hearings have been held during the past 18 months, focused on both the strategic plan and the national resource assessments.

National Strategic Plan Content: The recent development work on the strategic plan has been on issues raised in public comments on the draft and on situations that have changed since the draft was prepared. The content of the plan is built around a commitment to sustainability of the nation's forest and rangeland resources and four associated long-term goals to:

-- Protect ecosystems

-- Restore deteriorated ecosystems

-- Provide multiple benefits for people within the capabilities of ecosystems

-- Ensure organizational effectiveness.

The plan will include broad guidance on strategies to address:

-- the gap between growing natural resource management needs and constrained Federal funding, including consideration of cost efficiency opportunities;

-- relative emphases among major program (Deputy areas);

-- forest health concerns associated with catastrophic fire and other risks; and,

-- Wood fiber supply policies.

The implementation of the plan will be achieved through accomplishment of annual performance goals/objectives tied to the four long-term goals above and consistent with requirement of the Government Performance and Results Act; development of budget proposals consistent with these goals and objectives; and other actions to adjust our programs and policies, as appropriate. The expected long-term outcomes include health ecosystems, vital communities, and an effective organization.

Remaining Considerations: The plan being developed is consistent with Chief Dombeck's views regarding the evolution of public natural resource Forest Service management (Reference draft conference paper titled "The Evolution of Public Agency Beliefs and Behavior Toward Ecosystem-based Stewardship" by Michael P. Dombeck and James J. Kennedy, December 1995.) Given this, we would expect the content of the plan being prepared to be generally acceptable fo the Chief. Confirmation of his acceptance could be gained through detailed briefings and discussions, prior to forwarding the document to the Secretary through our Under Secretary.

Alternatively, and since the plan has not been written, the Chief may wish to pursue or revisit selected issues or other aspects of the plan. In this case, we would expect some delay in delivery of the plan to the Secretary and subsequently to the Congress. Whether the decision is to move ahead now or to reconsider what is being developed, further discussions/briefings with the Chief on the substance of the plan and intentions for its implementation would be useful.

Forest Service GPRA Implementation

Summary of Issues:

* Forest Service is a GPRA pilot and has been cited by GAO and OIG for "best practices."

* Originally incorporated into the Draft 1995 RPA Program, the draft GPRA Strategic Plan is to be presented to the Secretary by the Undersecretary. A prebriefing for the Undersecretary is scheduled for January 16 at 2pm.

* Although not required by GPRA, the Forest Service is preparing a FY 1998 GPRA Performance Plan.

* There are over 20 efforts underway to develop performance measures, however lack of resources has hindered effective coordination of these efforts.

Discussion:

GPRA Pilot: The Forest Service is a GPRA Performance Plan pilot and as a pilot has produced performance plans for FY's 1994-1997. The performance plan for FY 98 is in progress and will be the model for the FY 1999 plan - the first required for all agencies by the Act.

GPRA Leadership: The Forest Service has been considered a leader among natural resource agencies in the field of GPRA and performance measurement. It co-founded the Natural Resources GPRA Forum. USDA OIG described the Forest Service 1996 performance plan as the best USDA plan and the agency was featured in USDA testimony on GPRA to the House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology. GAO cited the Forest Service in its "best practices" studies and urged the Congressional Institute to use the agency as an example in GPRA briefings to Congressional staff. The Forest Service also pretested several GAO GPRA questionnaires and participated in a GAO panel on integrating GPRA into the budget process.

Strategic Plan: Under the Resources Planning Act (RPA) the Forest Service has been preparing strategic plans (RPA Program) for the past 20 years. The GPRA strategic plan requirements were incorporated into the Draft 1995 RPA Program. At the request of the Secretary, the GPRA Strategic Plan was disaggregated into a separate document. A premeeting with the Under Secreatary has been scheduled for January 16, in anticipation of a briefing before the Secretary. The strategic goals in the 1995 draft RPA Program have been used in the completed GPRA performance plans and in formulation of the Forest Service's budget requests for FYs 1996 through 1999.

Performance Plan: The Forest Service has taken an iterative approach during the pilot phase, building on successes in previous plans. The FY 1994 and FY 1995 performance plans concentrated on developing a processs, establishing a format and goal development with staff director involvement. The FY 1996 plan included trend and baseline data, and the link to the RPA strategic goals was made more explicit through the use of a "hierarchy" of goals. The FY 1997 plan provided more direct information on customer satisfaction and was the first year that production of the annual performance plan was integrated into and became a part of the budget process.

The FY 1998 Report is currently being developed. Although not required by the "pilot" process, the decision was made to produce a FY 1998 performance plan as a dry run for FY 1999, the first year all agencies must prepare performance plans. The production of the FY 1998 plan has been integrated into the budget process. It uses a refined "hierarchy of Forest Service goals" which tiers from Forest Service mission, through RPA strategic goals, to tactical and annual performance goals. It contains specific quantified performance goals for each EBLI tiered to tactical goals which tier to the strategic goals contained in the Draft 1995 RPA Program. It contains "linking" language which clearly delineates why achievement of each performance goal will contribute to achievement of the relevant tactical goal and further delineates how progress in achieving tactical goals will lead towards achievement of the strategic goals. It contains baseline and historic data on performance indicators as well as proposed level of accomplishment.

Performance Report: Although a GPRA performance report is not required prior to reporting of FY 1999 accomplishments, the Forest Service has been doing GPRA performance reports

since FY 1994. The GPRA performance report has been incorporated into the Annual Report of the Forest Service. The Overview narrative required by the CFO Act has also been incorporated into the Annual Report. The GPRA performance report includes baseline and trend information as well as comparing actual accomplishments with planned accomplishments. A discussion of how the annual accomplishments lead towards achievement of the strategic goals is also included, although this section of the report needs additional work. This report receives wide distribution including libraries, interest groups, colleges and universities, Congress, etc.

Performance Measurement: The Forest Service has numerous efforts both underway and recently completed that relate to performance measurement. The Forest Service has attempting to continue these separate efforts under the umbrella of the hierarchy of Forest Service goals, however this is hindered by a lack of resources. The Forest Service is also working with other agencies on common approaches to performance measurement. Appropriate publics are being involved in each effort.

Customer Service: Customer Service goals are being integrated into the FY 1998 GPRA performance plan and will be further integrated into the FY 1999 Performance Plan. The Forest Service has been working closely with GAO on a study of best practices for customer service.

Proposed Actions:

Chief to be actively involved in the review of the GPRA Strategic Plan and the Secretary's Recommended RPA Program by interacting with NRE and the Department in the development of the final products so that they reflect Forest Service vision.

Endorse agency-wide review of the draft FY 1998 GPRA Performance Plan at the January Leadership Conference.

Provide the resources necessary to coordinate development of performance measures.

Facilitate Forest Service Reinvention

Significance: For some years the public has been concerned with the growth of the Federal bureaucracy, with perceived inefficiency in the delivery of Government programs, and with burgeoning costs. The current interest in achieving a balanced budget only heightens the importance of these concerns.

In response, the Forest Service has been seeking ways to improve its organizational structure, implement more efficient ways to deliver essential services, and to streamline processes to facilitate implementation of ecosystem management. To meet the goals set forth in the National Performance Review and to align the Forest Service to meet its mission, the planned changes entail adopting a new work culture that emphasizes increased teamwork, shared leadership, multiculturalism, and continual upgrading of peoples' skills.

Interested Parties: Congress, environment groups, commodity groups, State and county officials, and Forest Service employees. Congressional interest in this subject peaked with release of the Forest Service's reinvention proposal. On the Senate side, members who have

shown a particular interest in this topic include Sen. Baucus (D-MT), Sen. Burns (R-MT), Sen. Campbell (R-CO), Sen. Craig (R-ID), Sen. Feinstein (D-CA), Sen. Murkowski (R-AK), and Sen. Stevens (R-AK). On the House side, interested members include Rep. Miller (D-CA), Rep. Williams (D-MT), and Rep. Young (R-AK).

Actions to Date:

Completed proposal to "reinvent" the Forest Service along lines that would facilitate implementation of ecosystem management and improve efficiency in delivery of programs. This proposal is described in the 1994 report "Reinvention of the Forest Service: The Changes Begin."

Developed, published, and distributed service-wide customer service standards. The standards are displayed in all Forest Service offices. Implemented a customer comment-card system at all Forest Service locations. Began to conduct targeted surveys of customer attitudes toward Forest Service service delivery.

Completed a reengineering study to recommend changes to greatly improve the efficiency of how the Forest Service applies the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to project decision-making.

Initiated a plan to reengineer some administrative processes and implemented a work-environment survey of employees to facilitate continuous improvement of the work environment.

Significant downsized the Washington Office, field headquarters, and the overall workforce. Consolidated and co-located administrative sites with other Forest Service units and other Federal Agencies.

Developed workforce streamlining plans to meet reduced staffing goals, reduced budgets, and increased employee/supervisor ratios. Developed new organizational structures in 4 regions and one Research Station.

Developed a plan to implement a telecommuting/alternative workplace policy for the Washington Office.

Additional Actions for Chief's Consideration:

Secure support for the Forest Service's reinvention proposals.

Secure Departmental, Administration, and Congressional support for implementing reengineered administrative processes and resource management processes.

Work within the Department and the Administration to ensure that streamlining aggressively reduces administrative and policy layers without reducing program delivery capability.

Secure Departmental support for redesigned performance agreement process for Forest Service senior executives.

Research-Based Management

Significance: Natural resource management is complex and demands the application of the best science available. Forest Service Research has been the world's largest forestry research organization, and has played a significant role in assisting the management side of the Forest Service do the best job possible. Declining research budgets and personnel reductions threaten this relationship.

Background:

* One of the keys to effectively managing Forest Service and other public lands, as well as the nation's private lands, is strengthening collaboration between scientists and practitioners and better integrating science into management and policy decisions.

* Active collaboration between scientists and managers is essential for resolving the complex issues associated with implementing ecosystem management and for maintaining public credibility and professional leadership. Ecosystem management, sustainability, biodiversity, monitoring and evaluation, forest health, and many other issues require involvement by research scientists to provide the necessary scientific and technical information needed for policymaking and decisionmaking processes at all levels of land management. In addition, Federal courts are demanding that Forest Service decisions be supported by scientifically credible technical information.

* Forest Service scientists have been heavily involved in providing the assistance necessary to carry out ecosystem assessments, conduct monitoring and inventories, and develop the technology for new management techniques needed to address these complex issues. Recent reductions of the Forest Research budget and the potential for continued reductions is draining the organization of its scientific expertise and the potential to acquire new expertise. For example, Research now has reduction-in-force authority and may need to use it. Forest Service cannot continue to lose this scientific strength and remain a conservation leader in the future. It is important to maintain an effective Forest Research organization.

Achievements: (where Research has been a major partner with management)

* Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)
* Forest Ecosystem Management and Assessment Team (FEMAT)
* Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP)
* Columbia River Basin Assessment
* Pacfish Conservation Strategy for Endangered Pacific Coast Salmon
* Interregional Habitat Conservation Assessments (HCAs) for Sensitive Species
* Southern Appalachian Ecosystem Assessment
* Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan
* Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Environmental Impact Statement
* Southern Vegetation Control Environmental Impact Statement
* Instream Flows Assessment in Colorado
* National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP)
* Numerous monitoring and evaluation studies
* National Human Dimensions Framework (ongoing)

Remaining issues or problems: Declining Forest Service Research budgets at a time when research needs for ecosystem management are expanding.

Priorities for Modest Funding: Research on monitoring methods (preserve in FY 1998 research budget). Fill four vacancies in Inventory and Monitoring Institute so that it may begin to address needed research gaps in these areas.

Important Contacts: National Forest System, other Federal land management agencies, private landowners, forest industry, consultants, environmental and conservation groups, and State and local governments.

Key Forest Service Personnel: National Forest Systems, Forest Service Research, State and Private Forestry, International Forestry, National Research Council, etc., (see Important Contacts below).

Review and Revise Existing Legislative Authorities

Significance: Legislation government, the management of NFS lands, has increased dramatically both in number and complexity since the 1970's. Some provisions of these laws appear to conflict, creating confusion for field managers. One prominent example is the biodiversity conservation standards that are included in the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Another good example is the public participation provisions of NFMA and the Federal Admisory Committee Act (FACA). The latter has been interpreted to preclude involvement by interest groups and key stakholders in Federal decision-making efforts, yet the eventual success of many natural resource management efforts is contingent on Government Agencies working together in cooperation with stakeholders.

Secretary Glickman pledged at his confirmation hearing that he would direct the Forest Service to review the legal, regulatory, and policy framework of Forest Service programs to determine where they might conflict so that the Administration could consider proposals for remedies. He directed Under Secretaty Lyons to create a task force within the Forest Service to review the agency's underlying statutes and regulations to determine how they relate to each other and where they may conflict. The task force has presented its draft study to the Secretary.

In June 1995, Congress requested that GAO conduct a study on Forest Service decisionmaking. Specifically, GAO was directed to describe the current agency decisionmaking process for plans and project level activities, identify how laws and regulations relate to the decisionmaking process, assess the time and cost of the decisionmaking process, and identify the conflicts that affect the process. GAO anticipates providing a draft for comment by the Forest Service as early as the week of January 6, 1997.

Interested Parties: White House, Congress, Tribal, State, and local governments; environmental groups, commodity interest groups; and Forest Service employees.

Actions to Date:

Initiation of a study to identify areas of conflict in forest management laws and develop possible corrective and/or proposed legislation.

Discussion with interagency ESA group.

Additional Actions for Chief's Consideration

Support efforts to identify and resolve conflicts in existing legislative authorities, including proposal of appropriate legislative remedies if needed.

Active Support of FY 1998 Budget

The overall budget for the Forest Service (FS) has been declining while controversies and demand for FS programs are sharply increasing. The FS as a whole needs to know that the Chief is aware of these issues and dedicated to support of adequate funding to meet public expectations. Some specific issues and programs for which an indication of the Chief's interest and intended involvement in the FY 1998 Appropriations process would be viewed as a positive signal are briefly discussed.

Forest and Rangeland Research: The nation's high standard of living is heavily based on technology. The FS has one of the world's primary forestry research organization. Capability has declined both in terms of scientists and state-of-the-art equipment. Meanwhile the demands are increasing. The following statement is suggested:

Chief's Statement: I believe strongly in the importance of bringing the best available scientific information to resource management. We owe that to the American public. We owe that to the FS line officers and to other public and private forestry managers who are responsible on a daily basis for making management and policy decisions. Solid, long-term research results can't happen if research programs aren't funded and staffed. The FS needs a strong, fiscally healthy research arm staffed with highly motivated researchers who are the best and the brightest in their fields. However, FS Research capability has dropped from 964 to 692 scientist years and there is a large need to provide state-of-the-art equipment. It's time to declare we cannot tolerate any further declines in funding levels or in numbers of scientists. I pledge my unwavering support for rebuilding FS Research so it can fully redeem the role we expect of it: being a visible and credible source of information for sceince-based natural resource management. And I will start by strongly supporting Research through the FY 1998 Appropriations process.

Funding Firefighting and Fuels Management: There are no greater issues for restoring healthy ecosystems than getting on top of hazardous fuel conditions that threaten wide areas of the National Forest System (NFS). These conditions give rise to high and increasing costs of emergency firefighting. It is extremely important that an mechanism be devised which provides appropriate funding for these purposes.

Chief's Statement: A large part of the NFS is at risk of severe fires due to buildup of fuels and increased stand density. At the same time the population living adjacent to and within forests is

increasing rapidly. This situation underlies rapidly increasing fire costs. Funding preparedness and emergency costs has been inadequate and undependable. And work to reduce hazardous fuels has been extremely limited. This situation must be changed if we are to avoid catastrophic losses and reduce costs overtime. I want you to know that this is a high priority for me and that I will continue to work with the Administration and the Congress to reach an effective solution.

Overall Engagement with the Budget: The research and fire issues are critical but there are many more. Virtually all NFS programs are under considerable pressure to meet current demands and to move toward improved ecosystem health. The S&PF is an important mission area that has more potential to satisfy public interests as well as to become a more effective partner of the FS. Other significant challenges include funding claims for timber sales modified or terminated principally for environmental reasons. What is important is for the FS organization to know that you will be engaged and that you will battle within the Administration and the Congress for the funding to do the job expected of the FS.

Chief's Statement: I am well aware that there are myriad financial demands on the FS beyond research and fire. I know that demands on most programs are intense, that we have opportunities in the S&PF mission area and others and that we have other significant demands such as current and potential timber claims. I want to achieve the goals set forth in the "Course to the Future." I will be fully engaged in this effort and look forward to working with you toward this end.

Address Potential Devolution of Public Lands

Significance: A growing number of citizens and organizations feel public lands could be better managed by private sector or State or local governments. Recently, proposals have surfaced to turn wilderness areas over to The Wilderness Society, sell timber lands to the highest bidder, and turn public land management over to the States. One argument is that the Federal Government can no longer afford to manage these lands, and that the private sector and States can manage them more cost-effectively.

Senators Burns (R-MT) and Craig (R-ID) have sponsored a bill, S.1151, that calls for the establishment of a National Lands and Resources Management Commission to issue a report that includes, inter alia, a review of the patterns of Federal land ownership and possible transfers of land between government entities and private individuals to improve management of these lands.

Interested Parties: Congress, The Land Trusts, Holders of Authorization for Use and Occupancy of NFS lands, Tribal governments, State governments.

Actions to Date:

Speeches by Forest Service Leadership, Discussions with Permittee Organizations.

Address Violence Towards Forest Service Employees

Significance: Since the creation of the Forest Service, there have been challenges to the authority of the Federal government regarding public lands. Ranchers, herders, loggers, and

others have attempted to influence legislators and Forest Service administrators regarding the lands, and occasionally violence towards government employees has resulted when the administration of the lands have been deemed unsatisfactory to forest users.

Challenges to federal ownership of public lands by various groups are increasing. Drug production on the National Forest System (NFS) has increased significantly. The NFS contains about 9 percent of the nation's land mass and between 25-43 percent of all cannabis seized has come from that 9 percent of land. Significant public safety issues accompany drug trafficking.

Cases of harassment against Forest Service employees have significantly increased since last year. The number of bomb threats to Forest Service facilities have rapidly increased since the April 19 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building.

This is of grave concern to the leadership of USDA and the Forest Service.

Interested Parties: White House, Congress, Law Enforcement agencies, USDA employees.

Actions to Date:

Reorganized law Enforcement and Investigations to report directly to the Chief.

Obtained commitment of support from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for resource crime investigation and threats against employees.

Developed safety-related training materials for all employees.

Additional Actions for Chief's Consideration:

Work with Congress to gain help and understanding of law enforcement issues.

Help to institute a case tracking system to increase cooperation with State and local authorities and comply with Uniform Crime reporting requirements.

Help to increase cooperative relationships with the Department of Justice.

Reassure employees of Department support and encourage their use of law enforcement services.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

There are a number of important emerging or long-standing issues that may come to the Chief's attention over the next several months. These are arranged by Program Area.

Forest Service Research Issues

Inventory and Monitoring Institute

Setting the Stage

* Reliable information on the basic condition and health of the forest ecosystems we are charged to manage is absolutely essential if we are to continue to call ourselves conservation leaders.

* The move to EM has expanded the range of uses, values and environmental services for which the federal lands will be managed over the long term. Managing for this broader range of management objectives requires us to expand the scope of the resource information we obtain at multiple scales, eg. multi-forest, multi-ownerships, and overtime.

* The future will be challenging: New information demands are rising and will continue to do so in the future. The need for expanded cooperation with other Federal and state agencies is exploding. There is expanding use of remote sensing and GIS technologies, which, if managed properly, can greatly assist in the efficient use and management of resource information at multiple scales.

* We are now being challenged in court on our inventory and monitoring practices. We are going to lose badly if be don't do better. Those losses if they do occur, will be a challenge to our professional credibility as a conservation agency.

* Our budgets are declining in real terms. We must find ways to improve our resource information by acting smarter and more effectively than we have in the past. We must integrate our inventories so we are getting broad-based information serving multiple objective at one time.

* We are not doing as good a job as we should be in obtaining and managing resource information. There has often been duplication. as well as significant gaps, in the basic information we need to manage federal lands properly. Much of what we do gather uses a variety of standards and protocols that makes it impossible to aggregate at various spatial scales and over time. The current state of affairs is unacceptable!

* We need to make every effort to gather a broad range of multi-resource information as a normal part of our resource inventories. One of your priorities must be to find ways to better integrate our inventories to gather information on such things as forest structure, wildlife habitat characteristics, ecological condition, and to gather a variety of other information needed for strategic ecosystem management assessments and planning. Periodic remeasurement allows us to track trends that are critical to forest plans and regional assessments. We can no longer afford to carry out inventories that are redundant or duplicative (if we ever could). We need to make single-objective, functional inventories an exception -- carried out only when there is no other choice. We must learn to work together better than we have in the past.

* In the past there have been a variety of efforts aimed at integration. The Forest Service has a legacy of attempts to improve its ability to gather and use resource information, but with less than desirable results. What has been lacking is a strong national coordination role. A common

denominator in our inabilities lies with organizational Inertia and lack of organizational commitment and structure.

* The establishment of the Inventory and Monitoring Institute is an outstanding opportunity to chart a new course for the Forest Service.

CHARTER
Inventory and Monitoring Institute

Institute Mission

The Mission of the Inventory and Monitoring Institute (IMI) is to facilitate and support the collection and management of compatible, scientifically reliable resource information at National, Regional, and National Forest Planning levels to support natural resource management.

Institute Scope

The scope of Institute activity is primarily inventory and monitoring at the national, regional, and National Forest Planning level. The Institute will address compatibility of forest or project level information where the aggregation of such information is in the best interest of the Forest Service and the Public. The Institute will focus initially on improving internal Forest Service information compatibility, and will also seek increased integration with external agency efforts.

Institute Functions:

1. Work with field staff to standardize protocols, eliminate redundancy and inconsistency, and promote quality assurance procedures for strategic level inventory, monitoring and evaluation activities.

2. Develop procedures to assess and certify the scientific quality of Forest Service resource data. Highlight areas where weaknesses exist, and develop strategies for improvement.

3. Advise the National Leadership team on actions, priorities, and budget allocations necessary to address strategic inventory and monitoring issues.

4. Provide technical assistance and serve as a clearinghouse of inventory, monitoring and evaluation information relating to techniques, procedures, protocols, and methods.

5. Coordinate, prioritize, and promote research and development of inventory, monitoring and evaluation techniques.

6. Facilitate interaction with and sharing of information, methods, and protocols with customers and external organizations. Serve as the Forest Service focal point for coordinating with State, other Federal, and International efforts in the area of inventory, monitoring and evaluation.

Institute Operations

The Institute serves in a staff role, not in a line role. Institute staff are both facilitators and advisors: facilitators of cross-boundary activities at the field level, and advisors in budget and policy matters at the National level.

At the field level, Institute staff work directly with technical staff across administrative boundaries to facilitate the development of standardized approaches to strategic inventory and monitoring. The Institute staff are technically competent, but are not the sole source of technical expertise. The Institute relies heavily on Forest Service expertise at all levels, bringing experts together to identify workable solutions to agency issues. This is accomplished through several means such as sponsoring workshops, technical meetings, and Ad Hoc Committees to focus on technical matters in a coordinated fashion.

Some Ad Hoc Committees already exist, e.g., the FIA Project Leaders Committee, and the Common Survey Data Standards Committee. Existing Committees continue to work, with varying degrees of collaboration with the Institute. Other Committees are chartered and sponsored by the Institute to deal with specific issues as needed.

At the National level, the Institute works with the NLT through a Board of Directors consisting of WO Staff Directors and others who contribute resources in support of inventory and monitoring activities (Appendix 2). The Institute advises the Board of Directors on the consistency and scientific credibility of Forest Service resource information. The Institute identifies areas of strength and weakness, and proposes strategies for improvement. The Institute makes technical recommendations derived from the work of the Ad Hoc Committees, and proposes budgets, program priorities, and decisions needed to implement Institute recommendations.

The Institute Director prepares an annual Plan of Work. This Plan of Work is developed in collaboration with the Ad Hoc Committees, and approved by the Board of Directors. The Plan of Work addresses priorities, deliverables, schedules, responsibilities, staffing, and budgets required to support the proposed work.

The Institute will be chartered and funded for an initial 5 year period. After 5 years, a multi-deputy group should assess the success and utility of the Institute, to determine continuation and/or modification of the Charter.

State and Private Forestry Issues

FIRE 21 and Federal Wildland Fire Policy Implementation

The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior accepted the final report and program review on Federal Wildland Fire in January 1996. The Forest Service, under FIRE 21, is working with our Federal partners and other cooperators to implement the policy which focuses on fighter and public safety, the role of fire in forest and range management, integration of fire with resource

planning, the federal role in the wildland/urban interface, preparedness for the upcoming fire season, and improving accountability. A fire cadre is planned in a national, interagency effort to develop a workforce to implement a safe and effective fire management program in the 21st Century.

Airtankers

The Forest Service uses air tankers as a significant component of its wildland fire suppression efforts. In an attempt to upgrade the industry's airtanker fleet, while minimizing cost of such upgrade, the Forest Service (in 1989) entered into an Historic Aircraft Exchange Program. This was an effort to acquire excess military aircraft that were appropriate for use as airtankers and exchange them with the airtanker operators for aircraft to be placed on display in appropriate aviation museums. A 1992 USDA OIG audit report concerning this activity reported that the Forest Service lacked the proper authority to conduct these exchanges as they were done. The Forest Service was successful in working with the Department of Defense, General Services Administration, and OMB in getting the passage of legislation by the 104th Congress that provides adequate and proper authority for the competitive sale of future excess military aircraft to the airtanker operators for use in our fire suppression efforts. The Forest Service is working with the Department of Defense at this time in preparing the necessary implementing regulations and procedures. Responsibilities for this issue are shared between S&PF, Administration (contracting), and P&L (appropriations and authorization issues).

The National Airtanker Study (1996) provides a strategic blueprint for long- term airtanker base needs. Implementation of the study will occur thru the recent legislation and thru various inservice funding initiatives to upgrade certain airtanker bases.

There remains some concern with the quality of aircraft on display in various museums as as result of these exchanges and we are working within the language of the Exchange Agreements and appropriate Property Management Regulations to see to it that these concerns are addressed.

The Department of Justice has also indicted two individuals (one of whom is a former Forest Service employee) for actions taken during the exchanges. The trial is scheduled to begin in mid- January 1997 and projected to conclude by April 1997.

On December 26, 1996, the Department of Justice reversed their decision to not intervene in a False Claims Act suit brought against several of the airtanker operators in 1994. This decision to now intervene renews the possibility that the Government will be directed by the District court, as relief in the suit, to reclaim the previously exchanged aircraft. This would severely jeopardize the Nations forest fire suppression capability.

Urban/Wildland Interface

An emphasis area from the Federal Fire Management Policy and Program Review is the wildland/urban interface. The Forest Service in conjunction with State, local and other federal partners is working to better define roles and responsibilities in the wildland/urban interface. Clearly, property owners must take responsibility for protecting themselves. Collaborative

efforts are underway to develop national tools to better inform and educate homeowners of fire safe building and landscaping practices. Fire prevention and fire hazard reduction efforts are emphasized on National Forest lands.

Enhance Assistance to Private Forest Landowners

Timber harvest on Federal lands is declining and nonindustrial private forest lands are coming under increasing pressure to provide more of the Nation's wood supply. Forty-two million acres (16 percent) of the Nation's nonindustrial private forest lands are in poor condition because of overharvesting, which has left these lands in a depleted condition. These acres are important environmentally and for future wood supplies and carbon sequestration. To maintain the productivity of these lands and ensure a sustainable domestic supply of timber and wood products, it is important to ensure adequate preharvest planning, reforestation, and the use of multiple-resource stewardship practices by private landowners.

Asian Long-horned beetle

An infestation of the Asian long-horned beetle was discovered in Brooklyn, New York in August of 1996; in September another infested area was found in the vicinity of Amityville, on Long Island. This beetle is extremely destructive and poses a serious threat to U.S. forest resources. It is a native of China, Japan, and Korea; and probably entered the U.S. in wood crating imported from China. Tree species at risk include maples, horse chestnut, apples, willows and elms. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has the lead for dealing with this introduction. The Forest Service Forest Health Protection staff has assisted Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the State of New York (NY) in developing a plan to eradicate the infestations. About 900 infested trees will need to be removed and destroyed before adult beetle emergence in April. NY has issued a quarantine to prevent movement of wood from the infested areas. However, because of funding difficulties with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and NY, no infested trees have yet been treated. If treatments do not begin very soon, it is unlikely that all identified infested trees will be able to be removed before the beetles emerge to attack new trees.

Asian Gypsy Moth Infestation in the Russian Far East

The cooperative Asian gypsy moth monitoring program being conducted by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Forest Service, State Quarantine Service of Russia, and the Russian Federal Forest Service have detected a significant increase in Asian gypsy moth populations in Vladivostok and Russkiy Island. Experience from previous outbreaks in the Russian far east shows that this poses a serious threat of vessels becoming contaminated with Asian gypsy moth egg masses, transporting them to the U.S., and starting Asian gypsy moth infestations in the U.S. This poses a serious threat to U.S. forest resources, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. Eradication of previous Asian gypsy moth introductions has cost the U.S. government over $15 million. The Russian government has requested the assistance of the U.S. government in carrying out a gypsy moth treatment program in 1997 in the Port of Vladivostok and Russkiy Island to reduce the risk of ships visiting these ports becoming contaminated with

Asian gypsy moth. Neither Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service nor the Forest Service has funds available to help Russia carry out such a treatment. The Forest Service Forest Health Protection staff has offered to provide technical assistance to help conduct a treatment program if one occurs.

Detecting Change in Forest Health

As part of our legislative and conservation leadership mandate, the Forest Service has for many years provided assessments of forest health for all ownerships through our survey and ground plot systems. Since 1990, we've augmented this activity by initiating with the States, the BLM and universities, the Forest Health Monitoring program. **This program detects annual status and change in health.** It provides an invaluable baseline to determine if changes in forest condition exceed normal expectations. The Forest Health Monitoring program provides critical input, in conjunction with Forest Inventory and Analysis, into a variety of reporting needs including the First Approximation Report on the Santiago Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management and the Environmental Report Card for the White House.

Seventh American Forest Congress

The Seventh American Forest Congress convened in Washington, D. C. in February 1996, with more than 1,500 participants representing a broad cross-section of interests and all parts of the country. With a theme of "Many Voices...A Common Vision," the Congress produced a set of Vision Statements through a highly participatory group process, along with draft Principles and Next Step ideas. To keep the momentum going, several Congress committees remain active and many include Forest Service members: **Legacy Committee** (providing overall coordination), **Communities Committee** (focusing on relationships between America's forests and the vitality of rural and urban communities), **Education Committee** (focusing on improving educational materials dealing with forest issues for youth and general public), **Management Committee**, **Policy Committee** (monitoring trends in forest policy), and **Research Committee** (focusing on need for, access to science-based information). The Legacy Committee has its first meeting February 1-2, 1997.

National Research Council Study on "Managing Non-Federal Forests"

In October 1995, the USDA Forest Service commissioned the National Research Council of the Academy of Sciences to conduct an independent, credible analysis of State and Private Forestry conditions today and into the foreseeable future. Their report will include a comprehensive overview of the resources, owners and existing public programs and provide recommendations for future public action with an emphasis on the role of the Federal Government. A committee of experts will identify the ecological, economic and social benefits obtainable from nonfederal forests and suggest effective Federal roles and approaches for the coming decades in sustaining the forests. The report will be released by the Academy in early March 1997 and will likely be of interest to Congress; Tribal, State and local governments; organizations; and individuals. The Forest Service and Department will have to determine what role the report's recommendations

will play in shaping policies, strategies, and budgets and be prepared to address those topics once the report is released.

American Indian-Native American Relationships

On April 29, 1994, President Clinton issued a memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments. In order to improve implementation of these principles, a final reference, "Forest Service National Resource Book on American Indian and Alaska Native Relations" will be completed in the Spring of 1997.

National Forest System Issues

Recreation Fee Demonstration Program

Issue: Increased authority to charge for recreation has been granted by Congress on a test basis. On-site retention of most of the fees is a major feature of the new authority. Aggressive implementation efforts are underway and will continue for the life of the test. Significant field commitment and management support is needed for successful implementation. Congressional support is also criticial to avoid appropriation offsets.

DISCUSSION: Subcommittee Chairman Regula (R-OH) of the Hous Appropriations Subcommittee for Interior and Related Agencies has been very supportive and active in legislating the authority. Subcommittee Chairman Gorton (R-WA) of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Interior and Related Agencies has been supportive, but not as active. Subcommittee Chairman Hansen (R-UT) of the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Lands has been very active in support of permanent fee legislation that is not significantly different from the fee demonstration authority. Other Federal agencies involved include the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service. The recreation industry, through the American Recreation Coalition, has carefully monitored the demonstration and has been generally supportive.
There are no new funds for start-up or administration of the fee demonstration program. Once fees are collected, 15 percent of collections can be used for program administration. The WO Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Staff has $10,000 in the staff budget for this effort. Carryover funding in the amount of $100,000 has been requested to provide guidance and review. Regions and forests are absorbing the costs and seeking carryover funding for the preparation and start-up costs of individual projects.

The Forst Service is now implementing the Recreation Demonstration Fee Program authorized in P.L. 104-134, the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996. Currently a total of 47 projects have been selected from 21 states and Puerto Rico for initial consideration in the fee demonstration. P.L. 104-863, the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1997, expanded the authority to include up to 100 projects. It also extended the test period by 1 year to conclude on September 30, 1999. Fees are intended to help the agency

provide a higher quality recreation experience, to address historic underfunding problems, and to test cost recovery potential.

P.L. 104-134, as extended by P.L. 104-863, provides 4 Federal agencies (USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service) direction to test the collection, retention, and reinvestment of new admission and user fees.

New Forest Service projects that are part of this test will be able to retain 80 percent of any new fees collected. The remaining 20 percent (available to the Chief to distribute according to the Act) will be made available to regional foresters to distribute at their discretion to the demonstration projects within the regions. (See exception in next paragraph). Available funds can be used to pay for on-the-ground operation, maintenance, and improvements to enhance recreation opportunities, visitor experiences and related habitat.

Demonstration sites where fees were collected in Fiscal Year (FY) 1995 will only be able to keep new fees that remain after deducting 108.2 percent of each site's FY 1995 collection amount from FY 1997 collections. This restriction was included in the Act to ensure that anticipated government revenues do not decline from the 1995 base amount causing a need for further budget cuts. New fee sites that did not charge in FY 1995 will have access to most of the new fee collected. Fees may be collected for entrance and user fees for facilities, visitor centers, equipment, and services.

Current agency projects range in size from a single campground, to a recreation comple, to a whole forest, to groups of forests. Most are new, although some include old fee sites.

To ensure that the Forest Service consistently meets the principles of the Act and to make the demonstration a useful and documented test of agency capabilities, field units have been instructed to address the following "gates" before fee collection can begin:

1. Local communication plan for each project must be completed;
2. Initial assessment of community position towards the project;
3. Business Plan Framework - developed and available locally;
4. Identification of agency unit, County, State, and congressional districts; and
5. Appropriate treasury account established to receive and disburse collections.

As of December 31, 1996, 9 of the 47 projects have completed the gates and been approved by the Washingotn Office to begin collecting fees.

Two fee projects wre in opperation in FY 1996: the Sylvania Wildersness on the Ottawa (Michigan) and the Chequamegon/Nicolet (Wisconsin). These 2 small projects collected a total of $21,943.75 in their first months of operation.

Project start-up costs range from $100,000 to $3,000,000. The more funds that are made available, the faster the projects will come on line.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is committed to the fee demonstration project and is working aggressively to mazimize benefits to recreationists. Communicating the program clearly to our public is a critical step in implementation and involves public affairs, recreation, and line

personnel. Surveys indicate the public is willing to pay if fees are returned to the source of collection and used for increased site enhancements and services. We must show that fees have been returned to the projects and used to make customer-based improvements, not just to replace funds used to other projects or sites.

Significant recreation planning and implementation resources are required at various levels of the agency. Start-up costs can be significant on some of the larger projects, totalling several million nationally. Accounting and law enforcement efforts are also involved. Active management support is critical.

CONTACT: Greg super, Economist (202/205-1398)

National Campground Reservation System

ISSUE: The Forest Service has maintained a single-agency campground reservation system for several years. In response to a recommendation in the National Performance review and the President's Vanguard, the agency joined with the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service to develop an interagency national campground reservation system; the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS).

DISCUSSION: The current Forest Service campground reservation system answered over 360,000 calls resulting in almost 150,000 reservations in FY 1996. This was the highest number of calls and reservations during a year for this single agency system.

Beginning in 1995, the Forest Service joined with the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service to create a new, state-of-the-art interagency campground reservation system. This effort resluted in an agreement to operate a joint 800 number that anyone seeking a reservation at a Federal campgrounds could use. It was also agreed that the single agency systems, and that the Forest Service and Corps of Engineers would continue to develop the new, state-of-the-art system. The Bureau of Land Management, having the smallest number of reserved sites, would continue to work with the Forest Service and the Corps of Engineers, but could include its reserved units in either or both of the reservation systems.

The Request for Proposal for the new system will be issued in January 1997. Award of the resulting contact is scheduled for the spring.

Once the contract is awarded, the Corps of Engineers will be the first to bring its campgrounds under the new reservation system. The Forst Service, with the largest of the three inventories, will add its inventory into the contract for the 1998 camping season. The Forest Service will maintain its current single-agency campground reservation system until 1998.

SUMMARY: With Nationa Forest Recreation demands at an all-time high, there will be a number of benefits to the NRRS. The primary mission is to provide quality customer service. Implementation of the new system will provide an easy, innovative way for the public to reserve Federal recreation facilities. NRRS will provide:

** Simple, consistent "one-stop" shopping for national forest recreationists.

** Multiple means of customer access through the phone, internet, FAX, and other technological innovations.
** Systematic means to streamline and modeernize business practices and establish accountability for handling funds.
** Reduced workload and operating costs for those with local reservation systems.
** Simplification of the collection of user fees.

CONTACT: Jose Salinas, Assistant Director (202/205-1422)

Recreation Special Uses Program

ISSUE: Special use permittees provide thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of income to local communities and millions of hours of recreation to the public. This level of impact in permit preparation and administration has taxed the abilities of the Forest Service to maintain quality customer service and fiscal integrity.

DISCUSSION: There are approximately 25,600 recreation special use permit holders operating on the national forests. Permit lengths vary from 5 to 40 years. Some 1,700 of these permit holders have invested billions of dollars in permanent infrastructure on the national forests to provide valuable recreation opportunities to the public such as ski areas and marinas. Nearly 5,300 are operating under short-term permits (less than 5 years). Many of these permittees have invested millions of dollars in non-permanent inventory to support the recreation they provide. Outfitting and guiding via horses and reiver rafting and concessionaires operating campgrounds and day use areas owned by the federal government are examples.

In addition, about 1,400 permits are issued annually for short-term commercial recreation events. The remainder of the 25,600 permits are issued for private recreation residences, private boat docks, and other private recreational uses.

A recent GAO audit indicated that commercial recreation special use permittees in fiscal year 1994 generated over $1.2 billion in sales on the national forests and returned over $25 million in fees back to the Federal government. The 1995 Draft RPA Program identified recreation's contribution to GDP as $97.8 billion.

With declining budgets, we are lagging far behind in administering existing permits and issuing new permits to react to a growing demand by the public. As a result, we must do our work more efficiently, therefore, we have chartered a reengineering team to look at the way we process special uses and help us to develop methods that streamline the work. The focus is on reducing processing time for applications, establising a quality user friendly data/billing base, raising the competency level of permit administrators by 1998, and establishing a continuously updated customer satisfaction measure.

Our relationship with key players is of prime importance. Existing and potential permittees: our inability to act on requests in a timely manner creates an unacceptable business climate. Forest Service permit administrators: out of date policy and inadequate training puts administrators at a disadvantage when dealing iwth permittees, lawyers, and accounting specialists. Congress: due to constituency concerns, various committees have asked GAO and OIG to investigate such

subjects as whether they agency is obtaining fair market vaaalue for land use rental and can the Forest Service implement cost recovery. Congressional members have also introduced legislation to address permittee special needs due to the perception that the Forest Service cannot or will not address them. The Department of Labor and GAO: they believe permits are contracts, leases, and licenses, and we should administer them as such.

There are no new funds to focus on the issue. All efforts are covered through existing appropriations and staffing. Establishment of a two-person focus team to address the overall concerns would require $200,000 annually for 5 years. this would allow the team to rewrite rules and policy, establish training curriculum and conduct initial training.

More and more courts and other federal agencies are suggesting (firmly) that special use permits are contracts. Forest Service has always maintained that permits are an agreement short of a contract and that contract law does not prevail. As our permittees become larger in scale and more business in nature, we find ourselves less able to defend this position. The Department of Labor is also saying our concession permits are "service contracts" shich brings in Davis Bacon wages along with questions on the use of volunteers by permittees and wages owed. The Forest Service will have to address this question soon. A change from a permit to contract will affect the very core on how we do business in recreation special uses.

We have challenged our employees to seek creative ways of providing recreation services to the public. Our special use permitting processes and authorities are lagging behind the imagination of our employees. We are developing a new process called Public/Private Ventures (PPV). PPV fully engages the private sector to invest in the construction and operation of campgrounds either in whole or in partnership with the Forest Service. We are investigating the authorities and permitting process to make this creative opportunity successful.

SUMMARY: The increased level of use and investment has challenged our Special uses workforce in ways that were not imagined in the past. Shifts in workforce have placed employees in administrative positions who have no or very little training for the job. Permittees have changed from the "mon and pop" to multi-state and sometimes international operations. permittees have become more sophisticated and the Forest Service has stagnated and in many cases fallen behind.

A reengineering team has been established and has been working for several months to define special uses problem areas and propose solutions. The team's charter calls for a final report in April 1997. Meetings with the Department of labor are being scheduled to define clearly the issue of contract vs. permit and when volunteers cannot be used by nonprofit employees.

A just-released GAO report, "Fees for Recreation Special Use Permits Do Not Reflect Fair Market Value," highlights the shortcomings of the GRFS fee system and the agency's inability to conduct cost recovery for processing permits. An action plan will be developed.

CONTACT: Ken Karkula, Special Uses Program Manager (202/205-1426)

Wilderness Management Program

ISSUE: The increased emphasis on noncommodity values of national forests and the congressional mandate to protect the designated wildernesses under Forest Service administration requires a shift in budget emphasis and wilderness priorities.

DISCUSSION: Wilderness is a special place designated for the use and enjoyment of the American people. It is an integral part of this country's history. Its preservation is valued by both wilderness users and those who may never visit wilderness. Wilderness acreage in national forests has doubled in the past decade, totalling 19 percent of national forest acreage (35 million acres).

"Wilderness Preservation: Problems in Some National Forests Should be Addressed," (GAO/RCED-89-202) identified the need for resource inventories, review of administrative sites, additional funds and personnel, better wilderness planning, and natural fire management.

More proactive planning and interdisciplinary management, more internal training for managers, and substantially increased public education efforts are needed to keep wilderness primarily affected only by the forces of nature, with the imprint of human activities substantially unnoticeable. Fire needs to be returned to the wilderness ecosystem.

The Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness training Center were established in 1993. Both are interagency facilities located in Montana. The research institute was created to obtain and provide information necessary to sustain wilderness resources in an ecologically and socially sound manner for the present and future. The training center fosters excellence in wilderness stewardship by developing knowledgeable, skilled, and capable wilderness managers.

Specific Wilderness issues of national significance:

** Helicopter Landings in Alaska Wilderness. the regional forester will soon sign the record of decision on the limited use of helicopter landings in Alaska National Forest System Wilderness. the decision is based on the existing use authority of the Wilderness Act prior to enactment of Wilderness on the Tongass National Forest in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and not on ANILCA authority. Whatever the decision, it will be controversial.

** Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). Resolution of the use of motorized boats in the BWCA is being attempted using formal mediation procedures under the Federal Mediation Board. It is hoped that the effort will forestall introduction of additional legislation in the 105 th Congress similar to that introduced in the 104th Congress.

** Rock Bolting in Wilderness. The Forest Service recently pulled a proposed rule prohibiting the use of fixed anchors (rock bolts) in Wilderness. The use of fixed anchors has the potential to degrade wilderness values. the proposal became controversial in the climbing community, generating several hundred letters. It has been withdrawn for further interaction with concerned interests.

** Prescribed Natural Fire. the planned use of prescribed fire remains controversial but necessary for forest health in Wilderness. Continued collaboration with Fire and Aviation Management and field units will be necessary to respond to the challenges

of managing prescribed natural fire in small Wilderness areas. Other challenges include developing a comprehensive approach to use of fire as a tool and providing information and achieving informed consent of publics at the local, regional, and national levels.

SUMMARY: Wilderness areas provide tremendous opportunities for the public to seek solitude and peace away from the trappings of modern society. However, they are not without controversy over how they should be managed.

CONTACT: Gerald L. Stokes, Assistant Director for Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Special Areas (202/205-0925)

Recreation Use on the National Forests

ISSUE: The national forests are the largest single provider of public outdoor recreation in the United States. Recreation use information and trends are critical elements, both internally and externally, for discussions about budgets, planning, human use impacts, ecosystem management, overall management priorities, and quality service to the public.

DISCUSSION: There are many customers for Forest Service recreation use information. Internal customers include local managers and research, as well as the National Leadership Team. The agency needs to understand the patterns, magnitude, and trends of recreation use for effective resource allocation to ensure quality experiences and available opportunities for our customers. Valid use statistics are also needed for economic impact analysis for program comparisons and community impact studies. Currently, use statistics are derived from field units through a makeshift upward reporting system, while we convert to an integrated database system (INFRASTRUCTURE). Congress, USDA, other agencies, and states are also users of this use data. Gathering and processing recreation use information costs several million dollars annually. the total fiscal year 1996 recreation budget (including Recreation, Wilderness and Heritage programs) was $267 million.

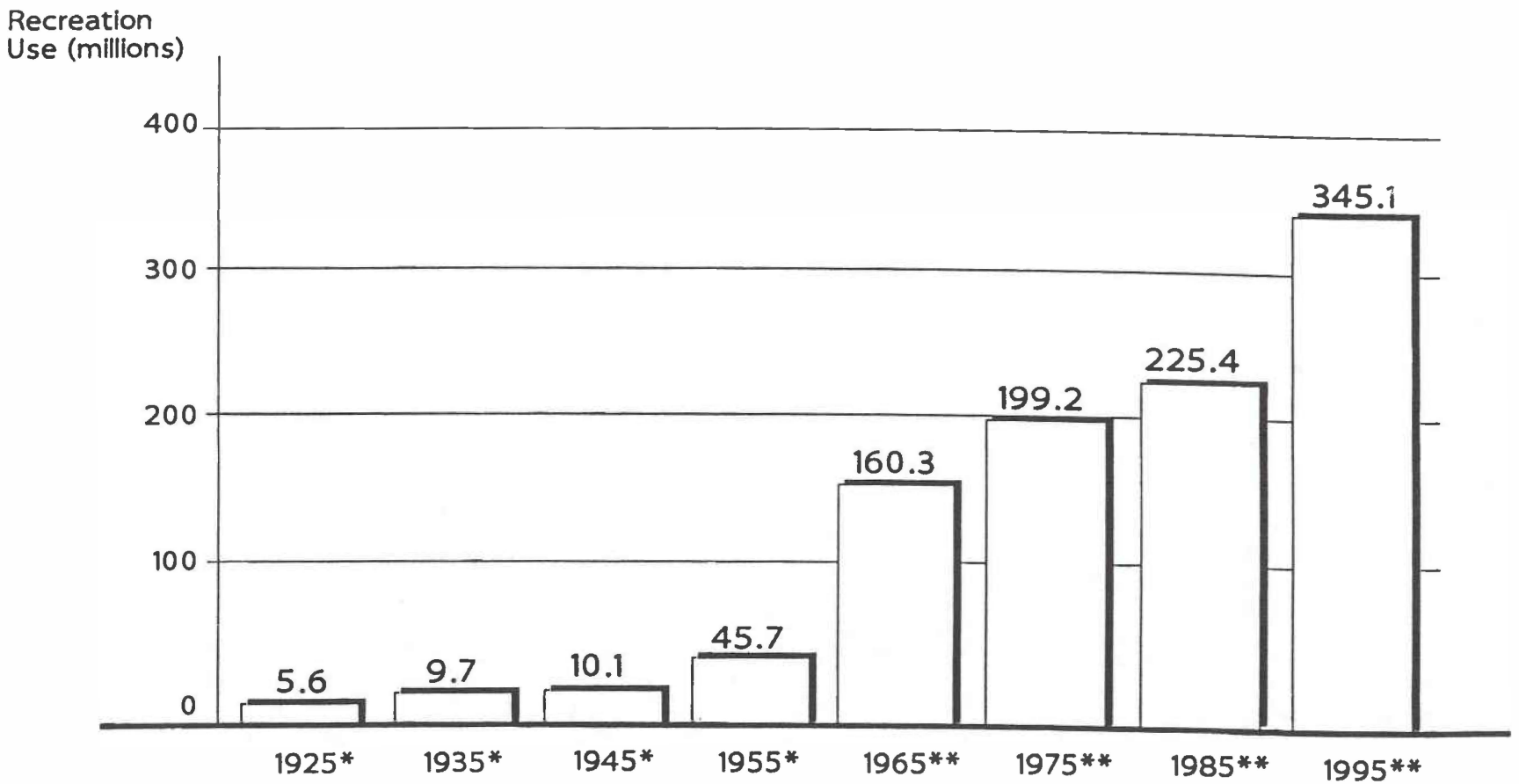
Recreation use on the national forests was first recorded in 1924 with over 4.6 million visits. It has grown dramatically over the years to over 800 million visits in 1995. Figure A shows use from 1925 to 1995. More use is made of the national forests than any other public outdoor recreation provider.

The Forest Service RPA Draft 1995 Program projects that recreation use will increase over 60 percent from the 1993 base level to over 1.2 billion visits by 2045.

National forest visitors are looking for a wide spectrum of recreation opportunities; some seek highly developed activities at Forest Service campgrounds and ski resorts while many others seek the wild places to hunt, backpack, fish, horesback ride, enjoy wildlife viewing, explore cultural heritage, and hike. Figures B and C show 1995 recreation use by major activity type and by location (state and Forest Service region). The increase in users and the increase in the diversity of what they are seeking will continue to challenge the agency to accommodate users and provide a quality experience for all.

Figure A

National Forest Recreation Use



* Visits

** Recreation Visitor days - 12 visitor hours - a visitor hour is 60 minutes spent on an area of land recreating. A visitor day can be 1 person for 12 hours or 12 people recreating for 1 hour each.

Figure B

1995 RECREATION USE REPORT SERVICEWIDE BY STATE
(THOUSANDS RECREATION VISITOR-DAYS)

	Camping, Picknicking, & Swimming	Mechanized Travel & Viewing Scenery	Hiking, Horseback, & Water Travel	Winter Sports	Resorts, Cabins, & Organization Camps	Hunting	Fishing	Non Consumptive Fish&Wild Life Use	Other Recreation Activities	Total	Percentage of Total States	Wilderness	Visits *
ALABAMA	184.1	117.1	63.2	0.0	0.4	161.6	68.0	5.1	80.9	680.4	0.20%	29.9	1,242.9
ALASKA	369.3	3,844.0	363.2	89.9	175.7	140.0	496.2	43.8	457.9	5,980.0	1.73%	647.1	10,648.2
ARIZONA	8,084.6	13,736.5	3,033.2	408.0	991.7	1,010.0	984.5	532.2	4,383.8	33,164.5	9.61%	872.1	72,196.9
ARKANSAS	618.0	551.1	221.3	0.0	25.8	517.5	106.4	28.8	137.1	2,206.0	0.64%	42.8	5,448.8
CALIFORNIA	17,781.6	36,691.9	5,538.3	4,605.9	7,682.5	1,653.5	3,203.1	381.5	3,438.6	80,976.9	23.47%	2,584.5	181,032.6
COLORADO	6,079.8	10,212.1	2,726.9	6,525.1	766.1	1,756.4	1,697.5	176.5	1,030.3	30,970.7	8.97%	1,277.6	60,488.1
FLORIDA	1,716.6	488.6	178.8	0.0	217.0	233.9	172.5	21.4	128.6	3,157.4	0.91%	28.6	9,472.0
GEORGIA	965.7	1,046.8	422.5	1.0	48.8	367.2	208.8	38.4	92.2	3,191.4	0.92%	106.1	8,768.4
IDAHO	4,280.6	3,947.1	1,303.5	878.9	570.6	1,138.3	937.6	188.4	1,018.7	14,263.7	4.13%	974.0	22,252.6
ILLINOIS	249.5	412.3	179.6	0.0	8.2	133.2	42.6	17.5	76.4	1,119.3	0.32%	133.0	985.0
INDIANA	231.8	94.0	82.4	2.0	15.8	102.7	52.0	5.7	32.5	618.9	0.18%	4.5	510.0
KANSAS	17.1	27.0	3.3	0.0	0.9	8.6	14.1	2.5	11.5	85.0	0.02%	0.0	181.3
KENTUCKY	664.3	719.2	264.8	4.0	15.9	217.1	222.2	13.5	129.6	2,250.6	0.65%	30.5	5,590.7
LOUISIANA	200.4	156.9	26.0	0.0	23.8	112.7	28.6	4.9	37.7	591.0	0.17%	6.1	1,737.1
MAINE	30.9	64.5	18.6	4.2	5.5	9.4	6.1	1.8	6.3	147.3	0.04%	11.5	1,000.0
MICHIGAN	1,603.9	1,564.0	255.9	65.8	138.9	522.0	405.0	20.7	143.9	4,720.1	1.37%	129.9	8,943.6
MINNESOTA	1,926.2	1,090.8	880.9	109.1	434.9	335.6	881.5	35.2	129.6	5,823.8	1.69%	1,408.0	8,896.9
MISSISSIPPI	256.1	371.8	124.0	0.0	11.8	412.3	96.7	30.7	105.7	1,409.1	0.41%	18.2	2,632.2
MISSOURI	684.4	616.2	361.0	0.1	11.2	281.1	145.9	20.2	110.1	2,230.2	0.65%	64.7	6,467.6
MONTANA	2,503.7	4,835.1	1,467.5	790.2	417.8	1,212.4	911.6	167.1	1,296.1	13,601.5	3.94%	909.3	30,820.8
NEBRASKA	93.5	41.8	21.2	0.4	7.8	58.0	2.2	3.1	20.1	248.1	0.07%	2.2	618.3
NEVADA	1,054.0	1,124.8	437.3	386.7	146.6	181.6	85.0	76.7	248.9	3,741.6	1.08%	327.1	24,169.0
NEW HAMPSHIRE	656.0	1,309.6	472.5	547.5	232.5	43.1	30.3	15.7	45.1	3,352.3	0.97%	117.9	5,500.0
NEW MEXICO	3,050.7	2,145.8	706.0	865.9	396.5	529.8	326.6	179.0	1,274.4	9,474.7	2.75%	546.4	12,685.5
NEW YORK	79.1	7.5	5.1	1.0	0.0	4.2	1.6	1.0	3.9	103.4	0.03%	0.0	51.7
NORTH CAROLINA	1,656.4	2,377.0	1,175.6	13.8	96.5	774.4	332.0	40.4	290.2	6,756.3	1.96%	271.3	19,905.8
NORTH DAKOTA	14.2	27.7	15.2	0.8	0.0	50.4	1.6	3.0	2.6	115.5	0.03%	0.0	385.0
OHIO	93.4	130.8	73.8	0.3	0.0	230.0	55.0	5.0	62.9	651.2	0.19%	0.0	900.0
OKLAHOMA	55.0	179.6	49.9	0.0	0.0	65.9	17.1	10.2	10.9	388.6	0.11%	1.6	1,790.3
OREGON	11,289.5	11,719.1	3,889.7	1,583.9	2,027.7	2,026.4	1,976.4	594.2	1,924.7	37,031.6	10.73%	1,003.8	97,483.8
PENNSYLVANIA	972.2	1,646.4	341.2	9.5	47.9	173.0	184.8	30.4	97.6	3,503.0	1.02%	3.4	14,795.5
PUERTO RICO	92.1	16.6	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.0	11.1	171.1	0.05%	0.0	700.0
SOUTH CAROLINA	267.2	233.3	136.6	0.0	0.9	210.4	58.4	13.6	66.6	987.0	0.29%	12.6	2,549.4
SOUTH DAKOTA	301.8	2,518.4	201.4	14.6	119.3	97.3	151.8	13.0	118.2	3,535.8	1.02%	33.9	6,022.3
TENNESSEE	1,242.0	927.7	320.3	4.9	100.4	257.9	198.8	30.1	86.1	3,168.2	0.92%	43.1	9,504.6
TEXAS	674.5	467.6	108.2	0.0	26.8	237.9	799.9	27.0	98.4	2,440.3	0.71%	9.1	3,852.8
UTAH	6,147.0	6,604.8	1,316.3	1,269.3	886.9	834.4	1,080.1	77.4	773.6	18,989.8	5.50%	461.3	43,554.5
VERMONT	127.9	310.1	107.8	600.0	55.4	85.5	21.2	1.7	82.9	1,392.5	0.40%	23.4	2,698.0
VIRGINIA	1,120.7	1,566.2	459.2	32.1	19.3	836.3	352.7	72.3	243.0	4,701.8	1.36%	86.9	17,862.4
WASHINGTON	5,165.5	11,490.7	3,384.2	1,090.6	1,119.9	853.3	420.0	120.2	1,152.5	24,796.9	7.19%	891.1	97,520.6
WEST VIRGINIA	552.9	291.9	153.8	5.9	37.7	219.9	129.2	10.2	59.7	1,461.2	0.42%	53.0	4,156.3
WISCONSIN	612.0	806.0	124.5	28.1	19.5	257.9	502.8	19.3	160.7	2,530.8	0.73%	17.7	10,134.4
WYOMING	2,011.0	2,468.5	1,294.7	408.6	729.3	591.6	378.7	84.3	386.7	8,353.4	2.42%	678.6	13,683.9
Total	85,777.2	128,998.9	32,316.7	20,348.1	17,634.2	18,944.7	17,787.1	3,207.7	20,068.3	345,082.9	100%	13,862.8	829,839.8
Percentage	24.86%	37.38%	9.36%	5.90%	5.11%	5.49%	5.15%	0.93%	5.82%	100%		4.02%	4.99

A recreation visitor day (RVD) is a statistical reporting unit consisting of 12 visitor hours. A visitor hour is the presence of a person on an area of land or water for the purpose of engaging in one or more recreation activities during a period time aggregating 60 minutes.

* Visits = an entry of one person upon a National Forest for the purpose of participating in one or more recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. Only the "primary" activity of the recreation visitor is recorded.

Figure C

1995 RECREATION USE REPORT SERVICEWIDE BY REGION
(THOUSANDS RECREATION VISITOR-DAYS)

		Camping, Picknicking, & Swimming	Mechanized Travel & Viewing Scenery	Hiking, Horseback, & Water Travel	Winter Sports	Resorts, Cabins, & Organization Camps	Hunting	Fishing	Non Consumptive Fish&Wild Life Use	Other Recreation Activities	Total	Percentage of Total States	Wilderness	Visits *
REGION	1	3,795.3	6,374.1	1,890.8	911.0	565.5	1,740.0	1,163.0	216.2	1,690.6	18,346.5	5.32%	1,111.5	39,700.6
REGION	2	7,401.9	14,314.7	3,314.8	6,670.3	1,343.3	2,236.6	2,086.2	250.7	1,421.0	39,039.5	11.31%	1,571.9	77,902.4
REGION	3	11,141.6	15,885.5	3,739.8	1,273.9	1,388.5	1,542.2	1,312.8	711.5	5,658.9	42,654.7	12.36%	1,418.5	84,921.4
REGION	4	11,345.5	11,145.1	3,539.7	2,542.3	1,763.9	1,941.3	2,100.8	283.1	1,792.3	36,454.0	10.56%	1,960.6	108,698.7
REGION	5	17,485.3	36,539.1	5,503.4	4,762.2	7,659.1	1,641.9	2,990.4	378.0	3,429.7	80,389.1	23.30%	2,488.2	156,581.9
REGION	6 **	16,711.3	23,336.0	7,350.8	2,669.2	3,143.6	2,902.4	2,519.3	759.9	3,088.9	62,481.4	18.11%	2,011.2	195,329.2
REGION	8	9,793.3	9,334.7	3,593.3	58.5	589.1	4,528.0	2,681.8	388.0	1,539.5	32,506.2	9.42%	688.8	92,814.7
REGION	9	7,733.7	8,225.7	3,020.9	1,370.8	1,005.5	2,272.3	2,436.6	176.5	989.5	27,231.5	7.89%	1,965.0	63,242.7
REGION	10	369.3	3,844.0	363.2	89.9	175.7	140.0	496.2	43.8	457.9	5,980.0	1.73%	647.1	10,648.2
Total		85,777.2	128,998.9	32,316.7	20,348.1	17,634.2	18,944.7	17,787.1	3,207.7	20,068.3	345,082.9	100%	13,862.8	829,839.8
Percentage		24.86%	37.38%	9.36%	5.90%	5.11%	5.49%	5.15%	0.93%	5.82%	100%		4.02%	4.99

A recreation visitor day (RVD) is a statistical reporting unit consisting of 12 visitor hours. A visitor hour is the presence of a person on an area of land or water for the purpose of engaging in one or more recreation activities during a period of time aggregating 60 minutes.

* Visits = an entry of one person upon a National Forest for the purpose of participating in one or more recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. Only the "primary" activity of the recreation visitor is recorded.

** Numbers for Region 6 are from 1994

The Forest Service is breaking new ground in the development of innovative ways to provide quality experiences to increasing numbers of users. Public/private partnerships and new fee programs are being developed, customer research is ongoing, management efficiency is being improved (using the Meaningful Measures model), concession programs are expanding, and more volunteers are being sought.

Increasing use levels present challenges and the agency is takeing the steps mentioned above to address demand increases in a quality manner. Another challenge is the development of the use statistics that reflect use levels accurately. The agency has had difficulty developing current use data for the new INFRASTRUCTURE reporting system, especially for dispersed recreation use. The agency has chartered a data sampling development team to improve the quality of use statistics. The team is made up of field level, Washington Office, and Research Forest Service employees, Bureau of Land Management employees, and several university professors. this team is developing an improved sampling and estimation system. The agency also recently issued a local sampling guide for improved use sampling (Missoula Technology Development Center). The cost of collecting use statistics is also being examined. Efficiency and quality are being objectives.

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management face similar use estimation and reporting problems because of the large underveloped areas each agency manages. National forests and the Bureau of Land Management areas usually do not have the tightly controlled and limited access characteristic of most national parks, making visitation monitoring extremely difficult.

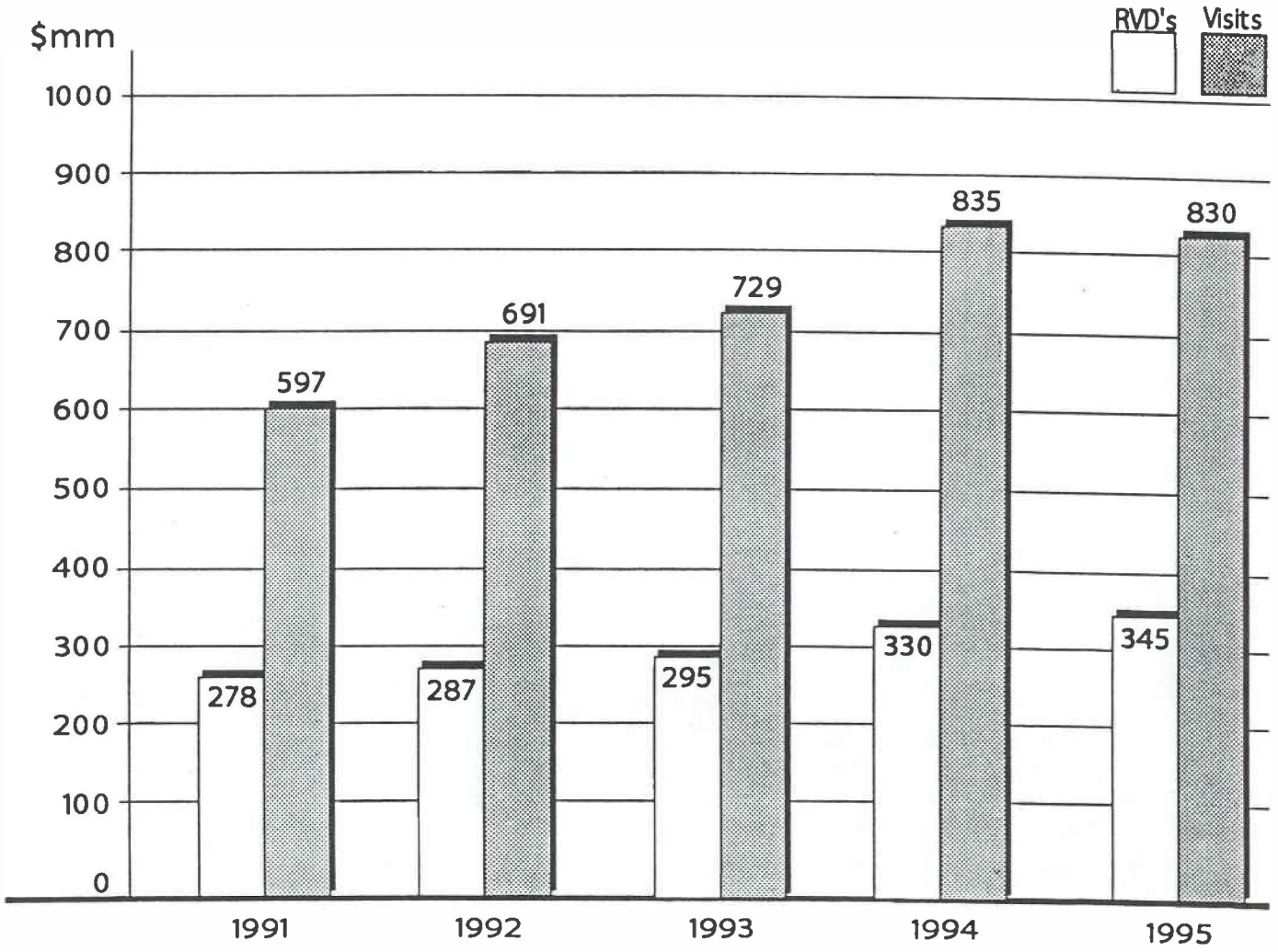
Another area of concern exists because there are many different ways to report recreation use statistics. the Foest Service uses recreation visitor days (RVDs) and recreation visits. Recreation Visitor Days (one day equals 12 hours spent recreating; this can be 1 person for 12 hours or 12 people for 1 hour) is a measure developed to give some weight to the length of time spent in a recreation activity. Recreation visits are counted as individual visits to a Forest Service site for recreation in one or more activities. time spent is not part of the visit calculation; one visit could be a 5-day camping trip or a 5-minute sightseeing stop. Each of these measures answer different questions. See Figure D for a trend and comparison display of visits and RVDs.

Key players in the Forest Service are Tah Yang, Britta Morner, Joe Meade, and Greg Super of the Washington Office Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Staff; Sue Kocis (Recreation Use Taskforce Leader, Ochoco National Forest, OR); Allen Jaten (National Meaningful Measures Coordinator); and Dr. Ken Cordell (Southern Research Station, Athens, GA). Hal Hallett (Bureau of Land Management) is also working with the Forest Service on this topic.

CONTACT: Greg Super, Economist (202/205-1398)

Figure D

National Forest Recreation
Visits & RVD's



Timber Sale Program

Issue: The amount of timber sold from national forests in FY 1996 was about 3.4 billion board feet, compared with over 10 billion board feet through most of the 1980's. The volume of timber sold in FY 1996 was up from the 2.9 billion board feet sold in FY 1995. Harvest levels, which lag behind sale levels by several years, declined to 3.7 billion board feet. Environmental concerns have increased, challenging both proposed and existing sales and increasing the proposed cancellation or suspension of a large number of sales. The low timber sale level will continue to affect many rural communities adversely.

NATIONAL TIMBER STATISTICS
Fiscal Years 1987 through 1996
(Volume in Million Board Feet)

YEAR	SALVAGE TIMBER OFFERED	TOTAL TIMBER OFFERED	TIMBER SOLD	TIMBER HARVESTED
1987	2,118	11,475	11,319	12,712
1988	2,232	11,348	10,998	12,596
1989	1,771	10,515	8,414	11,951
1990	2,872	11,059	9,250	10,500
1991	1,709	6,180	6,394	8,475
1992	1,412	5,062	4,458	7,290
1993	1,906	4,555	4,515	5,917
1994	1,005	3,408	3,056	4,815
1995	1,851	4,006	2,885	3,866
1996	1,936	4,015	3,384	3,725

Source: Management Attainment Reports

PACFISH-INFISH

PACFISH is interim direction for managing habitat to maintain management options and assist in the recovery of the Pacific salmon and steelhead on Federal lands administered by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of northern California. INFISH is interim direction for habitat management to maintain options for inland native fish on national forests in eastern Oregon, eastern washington, Idaho, western Montana, and portions of Nevada. Both sets of interim direction will be replaced by longer term direction being prepared through two EIS's. Preparation of these EIS's and their use for amending forest plans would have been affected by language in the FY 1996 Interior Appropriations bill if it becomes law. the President vetoed the bill, in part, because of that language.

Columbia River Basin Environmental Impact Statements and Assessment

The two Interior Columbia River Basin project draft EIS's, prepared jointly by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, will be released in early 1997. One draft EIS covers the areas of Oregon and Washington not addressed in the President's Forest Plan for the northern spotted owl; the other draft EIS covers the Snake River Basin portion of the greater Columbia River Basin in Idaho and Montana. The draft EIS's will use data from the Scientific Assessment for Ecosystem Management in the Interior Columbia Basin, a scientific document providing social, economic, and biological data on a basinwide scale. At present, it is still uncertain whether the project will go to a final EIS and records of decisions, because agreement has not yet been reached between Congress and the Administration on this issue. Completion of final EIS's may lead to individual forest plan amendments of the 17 national forests included in the geographical area.

Effects of Endangered Species Act on Forest Service

The Forest Service provides habitat for over 280 species of plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. National forests and grasslands are some of the remaining critical pieces in the puzzle of maintaining and managing our heritage of biological diversity. The Forest Service is involved in many issues relating to listed species:

Grizzly Bear. The Forest Service is involved in an extremely successful interagency grizzly bear management program. Problems with certain bears eating cattle and appropriate bear density are being worked out. The Fish and Wildlife Service is completing an environmental impact statement for reintroduction of the grizzly bear in the Bitterroot Mountains in Montana and Wyoming where a partnership of moderate environmental groups and timber interests are supporting unique solutions to returning the grizzly bear to the ecosystem.

Marbled Murrelet. The marbled murrelet is a threatened species of seabird, listed in Oregon, Washington, and California due to the extensive loss of nesting habitat. Logging in both privately-owned and Federal old-growth forests is the primary factor for listing this species. Current controversy surrounding the murrelet is over the 318 timber sales, specifically mentioned

in the Rescission Act, and the interpretation of the "known to be nesting" phrase used in the law. the recent court ruling interpreting the phrase has been appealed.

California Spotted Owl. The final EIS for the protection of the California spotted owl, a Forest Service sensitive species, is close to completion. The owl's decline is tied to habitat loss from timber harvest and other activities. the decision is expected to be highly controversial and will probably be litigated due to timber harvest levels.

Mexican Spotted Owl. The final EIS for the Mexican spotted owl is also close to completion. The Mexican spotted owl was listed as a threatened species due to habitat loss from timber harvest. The EIS is closely coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for the Mexican spotted owl. It will probably be litigated due to timber harvest levels, although the reduction is mainly due to other issues.

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. The prospects for the recovery of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker look much more promising due to the partnership of Federal management, research and private industry. The EIS is almost complete. Due to changes in timber harvest levels, some controversy is expected.

Wolf Reintroduction

The reintroduction of the gray wolf into Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho is the final step in a long, controversial process. The 12 wolves released on national forest lands may represent the last of the reintroduction effort. These top predators are expected to attract an extra $23 million per-year to communities near Yellowstone according to a Montana economics professor.

Olympic Games

The Forest Service will host venues of 2002 Winter Olympics. This is an opportunityes for visitors to the Olympic Games to visit the national forests and for increased visibility for the Forest Service. Snow Basin on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest (UT) is the site of the Olympics signature skiing events (men's and women's giant slalom and Super G). The Forest itself will be the backdrop for the all of the Winter Games. The Forest Service has already begun planning for this opportunity.

Alaska Subsistence

As a result of rulings by the Alaska Supreme Court (ANILCA, 1981) and in particular the Ninth Circuit Court (Katie-John, 1995), jurisdiction of Federal subsistence management has recently been extended to include all waters in which the United States has reserved water rights. The Department of Agriculture and the Interior manage fishing and hunting on Federal public lands in Alaska (approximately 200 million acres or 60 percent of the land). The Ninth Circuit decision is being appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Proposed regulations have been drafted, expected to be published February 1996, generally extending jurisdiction for Federal subsistence

hunting and fishing regulation to inland waters within the boundaries of Federal reservations within Alaska, but not to marine waters. The Forest Service budget allocated to the subsistence program has historically averaged about $1 million annually but as a result of the recent Ninth Circuit Court decision may escalate to more than $13 million annually.

County Supremacy Movement

Approximately 75 counties in the West, many of which include significant amounts of NFS land, have adopted land use ordinances which purport to restrict Federal land management activities. The number of such laws is growing.

Streamlining and Reengineering NEPA

Issue Summary: The costs associated with environmental analysis and planning have continued to rise. This rise has been, in part, attributed to inefficiencies in management of the NEPA environmental analysis and documentation process. Congress and the GAO have undertaken evaluation of the agencies problems with planning and NEPA compliance. Changes in the Forest Service NEPA process are needed to reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

Issue Background: Concerns with the costs of environmental analysis for timber sales, the inability to issue term grazing permits in a timely manner, and costs of large proponent driven projects (ski areas, mines, large utilities) has lead to concerns by the Congress and the Administration that the Forest Service NEPA environmental analysis process is in need of fixing.

Achievements:

* To this this end, the Forest Service convened a NEPA re-engineering team in 1994 to evaluate ways to streamline the NEPA process for the Forest Service. This team made 10 recommendations that the agency is actively moving to implement, including expanding Categorical Exclusions, establishing a more structured process of analysis, eliminating unnecessary analyses, establishing a network of examples. The reengineering team estimated potential savings of 40 percent if all the recommendations were implemented fully.

* The Forest Service entered into a collaborative effort with CEQ to develop a new model for NEPA analysis. This new model integrates adaptive management strategies, decision science theory, as well as larger geographic scales of decision making. This Adaptive Decision Protocol has been developed, pilot tested, and will be applied on at least 1 forest in each region in FY 1997. Estimated costs savings are around 20 percent in both time and dollars from current analysis approaches.

Remaining Tasks: The NEPA Handbook and Manual are being revised in FY 1997 and will go out for public comment. The adaptive decision protocol needs to be fully expanded for use throughout the Forest Service. Further aspects of the reengineering recommendations need to be followed, including development of a litigation/appeal data base for reference.

Budget: An estimated $150 Million is spent annually on environmental analysis within the Forest Service. Reductions in costs, if only of 3-4 percent could be substantial in savings Forest Service wide. In FY 97 a special allocation of $120,000 is being used to establish a new Adaptive Decision Protocol process that will help reduced costs and bring greater structure and efficiencies to the environmental analysis process for projects.

Key Players: The NEPA process has Administrative oversight by the Council on Environmental Quality. The Forest Service NEPA procedures must be coordinated and approved by the CEQ. Other key players are Congressional Committees that have oversight of the Forest Service. The General Accounting Office is currently involved with evaluation of the Forest Service decision making processes, and will report to the Congress in late January or early February. The BLM is in the process of streamlining its NEPA procedures and the Forest Service efforts must be on concert with the BLM.

1996 Farm Bill Water Rights Task Force

Summary of Issue: To secure passage of the 1996 Farm Bill, Secretary Glickman personally negotiated Section 389 on the creation of a Congressionally appointed Water Rights Task Force to review the Forest Service policy of requiring instream flow conditions in special use authorizations for water facilities that were up for renewal to mitigate past resource impacts on aquatic resources. This Forest Service policy is based upon several statutes and has been upheld in court rulings. It is strongly opposed by agricultural water users and their Members in Congress from the West who allege it is a "takings" of their private water rights without just compensation. It is also perceived as a states' rights issue: who should control the water on Federal lands of the West - the State or the Federal agencies that administer the Federal lands.

Key Players and Our Relationship with Them: The Water Rights Task Force consists of seven (7) members, appointed as follows:

1. Bennett Raley, Chair, of Trout & Raley law firm, by Rep. Gingrich;
2. Robert Lynch, of Lynch Law Associates, by Rep. Gingrich;
3. Richard Golb, Northern California Water Assn., by Sen. Dole;
4. Sherl Chapman, Idaho Water Users Assn., by Sen. Dole;
5. Betsy Rieke, Univ. of Colorado School of Law, by Sen. Daschle;
6. Richard Roos-Collins, Natural Heritage Institute, by Rep. Gephardt;
7. David Getches, Univ. of Colorado School of Law, by Secretary Glickman.

There is a 4:3 Republican to Democratic ratio among the appointees. The Forest Service's Designated Federal Official to this group is Lands Director Eleanor Towns; her alternate is Arthur Bryant, Director of Watershed and Air Management (WSA); and the technical support person is Stephen Glasser, Water Rights & Uses Program Manager on the WSA staff. Our relationship with the Task Force is business-like, professional and neutral. Several of the members have made FOIA requests or filed lawsuits against the Forest Service in recent years. The Administration delayed the appointments of Mr. Roos-Collins and Mr. Getches past deadlines set forth in Section 389. Congress then extended day-for-day the deadline for the Final Report by the Task Force on this subject matter. The Task Force operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and a USDA Charter, but it has been a very contentious effort to date.

Budget: The FY 1997 budget for the Task Force is $93,000. Monies are taken equally from the Lands, Watershed and Air Management, and the Wildlife and Fisheries appropriated funds. No stipends are paid the members, but we re-imburse their travel, per diem, and related office expenses, and rent the meeting rooms and buy all necessary equipment and supplies. Section 389 stated that funds appropriated to the Department of Agriculture for salaries and administrative expenses were to be used for the Task Force.

Issue: This issue is often labelled "bypass flows" because it requires that some streamflows would no longer be diverted by a ditch or pipeline diversion structure, or that some water always be released by dams, when in the past no or not as much water had been allowed to flow past the diversion structure or released from the dam. The issue came to prominence in 1992 in Colorado when the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest attempted to impose bypass flow terms in special use authorizations for seven reservoirs and pipelines to bring those permits into compliance with Forest Plan standards as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The permittees got 13 Members of Congress to write then Secretary Edward Madigan asking him to stop the Forest Service action. The Secretary responded that a balance should be attempted wherein the Forest Service would not unilaterally impose any bypass flows in these seven permits if the water users would work with the Forest Service and help it comply with FLPMA. About two years of intensive negotiations followed, and in 1995, the Forest Service issued new permanent easements for five (5) of the seven facilities, including one with a bypass flow condition that does not materially affect its historic water availability, three with a voluntary operating plan that will govern future flow releases or bypasses, and one with no flow conditions. The other two permits were extended by the Forest Service to allow more time to complete environmental studies.

While the original seven permits are basically resolved, there are about 8,500 other water facilities under permit on National Forest System lands in 42 states. Certainly some of them will require some sort of bypass flow to restore degraded fisheries and related aquatic habitats. An effort is underway to assess how many permits would be affected. Also, while not directly a target of the Task Force, the re-licensing of about 400 FERC hydropower projects on NFS lands is coming up in the 1997-2000 period and some of them are expected to included 4(e) conditions that could include bypass flows.

Section 389(d) of the 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) states: "The purpose of the Task Force is advisory in nature and is to make recommendations [to Congress] on the following issues specifically identified in Section 389 of the law [within 1 year]:

(1) Whether Federal water rights should be acquired for environmental protection on National Forest land;

(2) Measures necessary to protect the free exercise of non-Federal water rights requiring easements and permits from the Forest Service;

(3) The protection of minimum instream flows for environmental and watershed management purposes on National Forest land through purchases or exchanges from willing sellers in accordance with State law;

(4) The effects of any of the recommendations made under this paragraph on existing State laws, regulations, and customs of water usage; and;

(5) Measures that would be useful in avoiding or resolving conflicts between the Forest Service's responsibilities for natural resource and environmental protection, the public interest, and the property rights and interests of water holders with special use permits for water facilities;

including the study of Federal acquisition of water rights, dispute resolution, mitigation, and compensation."

After four meetings to date, the Task Force has achieved nothing significant.

We anticipate gridlock to continue for another several months until the pressure to produce their Report for Congress will cause the Task Force to develop their recommendations, some of which are expected to call for revising FLPMA and perhaps other statutes in favor of western water development interests. There may be a Minority Report that disagrees with the Majority, but that is pure speculation at this time. The status quo may also be acceptable.

No additional funds are needed for this operation in FY 1997.

Early key contacts for Chief Dombeck on this issue include the Secretary, Mr. Lyons, Sen. Allard (R-CO), Sen. Campbell (R-CO), Rep. Scott McInnis (R-CO), and later the Task Force members.

Environmental Justice

Issue Summary: On February 11, 1994 the President signed Executive Order 12898 which requires each Federal agency to develop an agency-wide strategy for addressing environmental justice in decisionmaking. Administrative appeals on and litigation of Forest Service actions has already begun based on requirements of the executive order. The Forest Service needs to be prepared to respond to these administrative appeals and litigation as well as ensuring that the executive order is followed.

Key Players: Implementation of the Executive Order is a responsibility or each agency. The Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff has the lead in the Forest Service in coordination with the Civil Rights staff. The Department is also active in preparing Departmental guidance, coordinated between the Civil Rights office and the Natural Resource Division of the Department. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has provided guidance on implementing the Executive Order in connection with NEPA environmental analysis which is a cornerstone of the EO. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has also provided guidance to EPA Regions on how to review Environmental Impact Statements for environmental justice components. The Justice Department is alerted to this issue and has attorneys assigned to advise agencies on environmental justice issues in litigation situations.

Budget: Implementation of the Executive Order will be done within existing budget allocations, primarily as part of the environmental analysis work the Forest Service does in Forest Planning and project level planning. In addition, environmental justice will be integrated with the civil rights program within existing budget allocations. Implementation of this Executive Order will not require organizational changes or new budget needs.

Issue Background: The Executive Order was written in response to disproportionate environmental impacts being imposed on minority and disadvantaged communities from Federal activities, such as landfills, power plants, and highways. The emphasis of the EO is to require Federal agencies to fully consider the impacts of their actions on these minority and

disadvantaged communities. The implementation of this executive order has been slow, primarily because agencies are unsure what level of analysis needs to be done, and what activities would require such analyses. We are already seeing this issue cited in administrative appeals and litigation for Forest Service actions, primarily connected with impacts to minority rural communities and Native American communities and activities.

Achievements: The Forest Service has been a key cooperating agency in preparation of the Departments policy and guidance on environmental justice. We continue to play a leadership role with the Department. Field units have been provided guidance by CEQ, EPA, the Department as well as Forest Service guidance. We are cooperating with BLM in development of questions and answers on the executive order, those will be distributed as well. Good examples of how environmental justice was addressed in some EISs has also been shared with the field.

Remaining Tasks: The National NEPA/Appeals workshop was held in Phoenix the first week in January 1997. This workshop developed a list of actions necessary to clarify guidance on environmental justice as well as actions to more fully implement the provisions. This actions plan will be followed during FY 97. The Forest Service will continue to play a leadership role with the Department in completion of the Departments Regulation on environmental justice and develop further implementation actions at the Departmental level.

New World Mine

The Forest Service is part of the Federal Team effort to meet the terms of the Agreement signed last August, 1996, in Yellowstone National Park by the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Battle Mountain Gold, and the U.S. Government. There are three task teams comprised of various Federal agencies working under the direction of an Executive Policy Team. The teams are identifying potential assets totalling at least $65 million, developing reclamation and remediation plans for the historic mine workings, and withdrawal of the public lands in the New World Mining District from any further minerals entry under the federal mining laws.

International Forestry Issues

Role of Forest Service in Sustainability

ISSUE: Sustainability is at the forefront of natural resource issues nationally and internationally. The concept is extemely useful in bringing disparate groups together and for integrating ecological, economic, and social dimensions into natural resource decisions. Commitments to sustainability have been made at the White House, USDA, and the FS. Thus far, however, FS efforts have been modest. Efforts in the FS have primarily been focused in IF, FSR, and S&PF at the WO level, and most of the work has been "initiating" rather than implementing. The primary issue for the FS relates to the level of involvement:

- Does the FS want to make sustainability a key programmatic driver and use it as the basis for integrating, implementing, and communicating our efforts (a proactive and leadership role), or

- Do we want to maintain the current role (a reactive and support role)?

BACKGROUND: Governments and organizations worldwide are seeking ways to implement agreements for sustainablity agreed to at the 1992 UNCED Earth Summit. Following are some specific actions nationally:

White House:

- 1993--Presidential Decision Directive (PSC-16), committing U.S. to sustainable management of all its forest lands by the year 2000.

- 1995--Santiago Declaration, as part of the Montreal Process, further committed the U.S. to developing and evaluating national indicators of sustainable forest management.

- 1996--Release of the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) report, "Sustainable America: A New Consensus..."

- 1996--reinforcement of the idea and need for an environmental report card.

USDA:

- 1996--Secretary issued Department Directive (9500-6) expressing commitment to the concepts of sustainable development, and instructing all Agencies to incorporate sustainable development into all their programs and policies.

- 1996--established a Sustainable Development Council, led by the Director of Sustainable Development, to provide a forum for policy and program development, implementation, and decision-making across mission areas.

Forest Service:

- Pre-1995--FS focused on Ecosystem Management and ad hoc efforts on sustainability.

- 1995--NLT chartered interdeputy area Sustainable Development Team to facilitate FS role in implementing sustainable forest management.

- 1996--Sustainable Development Team sunsets with reaffirmation from NLT to continue efforts in sustainability. The NLT endorsement has translated into the **First Approximation Report** and formal chartering of a sustainability team to guide FS efforts.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

General: If the FS is to assume a proactive and leadership role in sustainability, and have field involvement and accountability, it will take strong reinforcement from the Chief.

FS efforts on Criteria and Indicators as a product of the **First Approximation Report** will be a useful tool for accountability at the field level, and potentially for the administration's Environmental Report Card.

Initial Steps: Regardless of the role the FS chooses, several actions are needed:

1. Clarify policies and positions with the USDA Director of Sustainabilty.

2. Use the Secretary's Memorandum on Sustainable Development (9500-6) as a catalyst to communicate and reinforce the Chief's position on sustainability to line and staff officers.

3. Use the upcoming meeting with the State Department to engage in Administration efforts and to foster inter-agency support for the **First Approximation Report** on Criteria and Indicators.

KEY CONTACTS

International efforts--Mary Coulombe

USDA--Adela Backiel

FS--Tom Snellgrove

First Approximation Report (FS)--Katherine Jesch

Administration Issues

Financial Management

Issue: Recent OIG and GAO reports have been highly critical of FS financial management. In our opinion, some of these concerns are overstated but there are important improvements needed. In fact, the FS is working closely with the Department to develop a new accounting system. Other work is on-going to resolve specific problems, to develop better performance measures, and to compare results with costs for most program activities.

Chief's Statement: Natural resource management requires more than competence on-the-ground, we also have significant financial management responsibilities. Our performance is being severely criticized. I am aware that many improvement efforts are underway. I am interested and will personally get involved to help assure an acceptable result.

Electronic Freedom of Information Amendments of 1996

Public Law 104-231 amends the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552). Signed on October 2, 1996 and becomes effective March 31, 1997.

The purpose of the bill is to bring FOIA into the information and electronic age and apply FOIA to electronic records. It broadens public access to Government information by requiring that more information be available on-line. It expands the role of agency reading rooms, and requires agencies to create and maintain an index of their major information systems, and a description of their major information and record locator systems. Agencies will now be required to make reasonable efforts to search for records that are maintained in electronic form or format, and provide the information to the requester in the form that they request, including requests for the electronic form of records. The Forest Service responds to over 5,000 FOIA requests annually.

Employee Complaints

Forest Service employees in the Southern Region filed a lawsuit, requesting certification for class action by African Americans. The case was returned by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for clarification, and is pending an investigation. In the Pacific Southwest Region, a Federal lawsuit was filed against the USDA Secretary seeking to have a class created of female employees who have been subjected to sexual harassment. The case is pending, awaiting the outcome of a certification hearing.

Employee Survey

To evaluate progress for achieving multicultural goals, the Forest Service utilizes an employee attitude survey called the Continuous Improvement Process, or CIP. Through the survey, employees provide information about agency work processes and the workplace environment. The CIP is a tool to create a healthier organization and improve productivity. The first employee survey was conducted in April 1996. Actions are being developed to address issues identified by the survey; they will be implemented in February 1997.

A second survey will be administered in April 1997. There is a communication strategy to provide information on survey goals, expected outcomes, and timelines. The Office of Personnel Management, under contract to the Forest Service, will analyze survey responses, identify key findings, and provide comparison data from other government agencies. Survey statistical results will be available by July 1997. Additionally, discussions are underway to include the employee survey as an agency outcome measure in the FY 1998 Government Performance Results Act Report.

Financial Integrity

Financial Statement audits over the last few years have disclosed a situation of deteriorating systems, information and management interest. We are continuing to receive unfavorable findings on our financial information in other audits by the General Accounting Office and the

Office of Inspector General similar to those in our financial audits. The key issues are quality of information, allocation of resources, competencies, and accountability.

Forest Service IBM Implementation (Project 615)

The Forest Service technology modernization program is called Project 615. In February 1995, the Forest Service entered into a contract with IBM to provide the new technology. The Forest Service began testing this new technology which was designed to support administrative, scientific and technical (including GIS) applications. National implementation of the IBM systems includes replacing the obsolete corporate computers with this new platform in all Forest Service offices. The Project 615 Pilot Year was completed in August 1996. The assessment report has been completed and submitted to Congress and the General Accounting Office for their approval to proceed. The Pilot phase accomplished all of its objectives, and the Forest Service is ready to proceed with full implementation. We are currently waiting for approval from the General Accounting Office and a waiver from the USDA moratorium in order to proceed.

USDA Information Technology Acquisition Moratorium

On November 12, 1996, USDA issued a moratorium on all significant information technology acquisitions. The moratorium will continue until the USDA Information Architecture elements are in place. This moratorium poses a significant risk to the Forest Service by delaying modernization of our technology. The Forest Service has done significant planning and piloting of the Project 615 solution and further delays will increase the implementation costs, increase proliferation of other types of hardware, and decrease employee acceptance of the 615 solution.

Forest Service Multicultural Organization

In March 1991, the Forest Service set forth the Agency's multicultural goals and strategies in a report titled, Toward A Multicultural Organization. The six focus areas to accomplish objectives for becoming a multicultural organization are: training and development, work environment, outreach and recruitment, standards of accountability, work and family, and recognition. Implementation of strategies to accomplish these goals is ongoing. The leadership has officially recognized five employee groups to help the Forest Service become a multicultural organization. The groups are: the African American Strategy Group, the Hispanic Employee Association, the Asian/Pacific Islanders Employee Association, the American Indian Council, and Pathfinders for Persons with Disabilities.

Purchase Card Implementation

The Forest Service is playing a major role in implementing a new Departmental system to make the use of the Purchase Card (credit card) more efficient. We were involved with the original test with the Department of Commerce years ago, and have worked closely with agencies in the Department. The movement of smaller (less than $2,500) acquisition actions into the hands of

all employees can provide great benefits once we can make the accounting and payment process much easier. The Milwaukee Regional Office and the Tahoe National Forest in California, are two of the three test sites. Procurement and Property is providing a critical team for system development in the automating of the payment portion of the system in conjunction with Office of Operations and the National Finance Center.

Status of Audit Implementation

The Forest Service has been working with the Office of Inspector General and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer to formulate a plan for improving financial health. The Forest Service agreed to a three-party concentrated effort to correct the problems identified in the 1995 Office of Inspector General audit of the Forest Service financial statement, and other reports. We have agreed to a basic approach which should allow both statement preparation and audit of the 1997/1998 Financial Statements. The objective is clear cut: to restore faith in the Forest Service by improving our financial track record, adopting standards, changing systems, and improving financial information. The Forest Service is working with the Chief Financial Officer to implement the Foundation Financial Information System as the major step toward resolving many of the basic deficiencies.

AmeriCorps

Under the National Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the AmeriCorps program provides opportunities to Americans, 17 years and older, to serve their country by addressing the Nation's critical education, human, public safety, and environmental needs at the community level. In Fiscal Year 1996, the Forest Service planned a $9.4 million AmeriCorps program which was not implemented in accordance with congressional direction. An $8.9 million AmeriCorps program is planned for Fiscal Year 1997 pending Congressional reprogramming approval for implementation.

Downsizing

Since our downsizing efforts began in 1992, the Forest Service has reduced its permanent workforce through a combination of employment freezes, separation incentives, early retirement, and an aggressive placement program. The number of permanent full-time employees has been reduced from over 33,000 in September 1992, to just 20,023 in December 1996. The number of full time equivalent (FTE) years of work expended has been reduced from 43,327 in 1992 to 37,205 in 1996. Because most employees willing to leave voluntarily have been accommodate, continued reductions in the budget indicate that tools such as further buyouts or selective reductions in force may be necessary. Unfortunately, recent direction from OMB on use of the USDA buyout authority has resulted in a decision by the Forest Service not to offer buyout in FY 1997, unless an appeal of OMB direction made by the Secretary is successful.

Programs and Legislation Issues

GAO Decisionmaking Study

Issue: The GAO study of Forest Service decisionmaking is nearing completion. GAO expects to share a final draft on or after January 6. Both the Forest Service and CEQ will be asked to provide a formal response to the draft by mid-January.

The study was requested by Craig, Murchowski, and Burns in the Senate and Hansen and Regula in the House on June 5, 1995. The objectives of the study as defined by the requestors were to:

(1) describe the decisionmaking process from forest plans to project level activities;

(2) identify how the laws and regulations relate to the decisionmaking process;

(3) determine the time and cost of carrying out the decisionmaking process; and,

(4) identify conflicts in the legal mandates, untimely consultations, lengthy appeals processes, and/or funding problems that result in delayed, altered, or withdrawn land management plans.

It is expected that parts of the study will be used to support the legislative proposal recently put forward by Senator Craig.

GAO has visited six Forest Service regions. They have reviewed studies conducted by the Forest Service and others which dealt with the agency's decisionmaking and organizational effectiveness. And they have had several "in-depth" interviews with the Chief, who provided them with frank, straight forward answers to their questions.

GAO provided Congressional testimony on the preliminary findings of the study at hearings on January 25, March 26, and June 30 of this year. Normally, GAO reports to Congress only after issuing its final report.

It is expected that the report will be about 40 pages in the length. It is organized into three main sections, dealing with Forest Service efforts, the efforts of other agencies, and the application of GPRA. The report is being reviewed at all levels in GAO, including the Acting Comptroller General.

GAO has verbally shared the following findings:

1. There is no clear agreement within the Forest Service, in Congress, in the Administration, or in the public at large on what the FS mission is or should be today . . . and even if there were agreement on mission,

2. The implementing framework, including laws, regulations, case law and appropriations, is not conducive to consistent decisionmaking . . . and even if the framework were supportive to reconciling NEPA with NFMA and clearly defining biodiversity, etc.,

3. There are still compelling issues surrounding accountability . . . or organizational effectiveness on different levels:

-- within the Administration (e.g., Are all of CEQ's actions consistent with CEQ's charter?)
-- within the Congress (e.g., Are there too many committees?)
-- within the judicial level (Is one specialized court needed for natural resource issues?)
-- within the Forest Service (e.g., Why are there dramatically different outcomes from the same FS direction on adjacent forests)

GAO has not found any problems that the Forest Service had not already documented and/or prepared recommendations to improve.

Conflicting Laws

Issue: The FS is confronted with a serious situation that is proving very difficult to resolve. That is, the laws do not prescribe clearly how the national forests are be managed and for what purposes. For example, one law may call for production of a particular commodity while another will prohibit production because of consequences. Various interest groups utilize various laws to block what they don't like. Investments to that point are often abandoned. There is not a necessarily "correct" answer but this situation works against commodities. The FS tries to respond to all requirements and work through whatever barriers are present. The FS can continue to do this but the Administration, Congress and the public need to understand that unit costs are likely to continue to increase and that the "balance sheet" will show poor results. Many people in the FS are concerned with this situation and would like to see it clarified.

Chief's Statement: I am seriously concerned with the lack of clarity in the many laws that guide the FS. This often results in significant inefficiencies. I intend to search for answers to this dilemma and to use whatever legislative and administrative channels become available to daylight these issues and to press for resolution.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The following briefing materials provide background information for the various Forest Service programs. These are arranged by Deputy or Program Area.

Forest Research

Overview of Forest Service Research (FSR).

Organization:

* At our organizational peak in 1980, FSR accomplished 964 scientist-years of research. In 1996 we accomplished 692 scientists-years, a decline of 28 percent. This decline/downsizing has reduced our capability in key disciplines.

* The FY 1996 budget reduction resulted in 235 unfunded positions. Directed reassignments, attrition, and RIFs were used as downsizing tools. RIF authority continues in 1997.

* Research program leadership (SES) also declined 35 percent from 20 individuals in 1991 to 13 today. North Central Station Director has been vacant since 1993.

* Field organizational structure has changed as a consequence of downsizing.

    - Today, Research has seven regional stations, a national Forest Products Laboratory, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry.

    - There are 163 research work units today, compared to 207 in 1985.

    - We have 67 laboratory locations today, compared to 76 in 1985. We closed 7 in the past 2 years.

* Research headquarters changes were proposed as part of reinvention.

    - Last approved organization is a Deputy Chief, two Associate Deputy Chiefs, six research staffs which encumbered 78 FTEs in 1993.

    - A new Research organization is pending approval in USDA. It consists of a Deputy Chief, one Associate Deputy Chief, four research staffs (55 FTEs).

* These changes have reduced FSR capability, both in terms of the breadth of program coverage and, more importantly, the program depth for the coverage that remains. The "research capital" built up through investments in people and programs in the 1960s and 1970s is being exhausted and investments are not being made today that are essential to meet needs in the 21st Century. Morale has suffered.

Key Contacts:

* FSR is part of the federal natural resources science establishment serving all natural resource agencies. We coordinate research and development with other agencies through the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). FSR is most active

with the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) under Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

* FSR is a member of the science team within USDA.

* FSR works closely with DC-based NGO and association science stakeholders.

* FSR provides leadership in the international forest research arena and to United Nations organizations. We have responsibilities in several multi-lateral committees and bi-lateral agreements with numerous countries.

* "Must Meet" People: Jerry Mellilo, Jim Baker, Kathleen McGinty, Keith Laughlin, Tom Lovejoy, Jerry Thiede, Greg Brown, Steve Lovett, Cathy Woteki, Bob Robinson, Adela Backiel.

* FSR has over 1,000 active cooperative research agreements with research partners and has annually commited 8-12 percent of its budget to grants and agreements.

* Another measure of the importance of FSR to our stakeholders is the $30 to 40 million annually they give us to conduct special studies for them.

* Current budget is $179.8 million in FY 1997, down from a peak of $193.5 in FY 1995.

* The cost of doing research the past decade has risen at twice the rate of inflation. So "constant-dollar" comparisons severely understate actual effects on programs and people.

Key Issues for Forest Service Research:

* FSR experienced two contradictory trends in recent years: Our customers are calling for more and more science to redeem their resource stewardship responsiblities. Meanwhile, our science budget declines. Corresponding to this is a decline in our university partner's budgets and consequently their solicitation for more grant and agreement funding (this has caused some conflict).

* Within USDA, "sciences" staff work is often routed to the Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics. NRE is largely ignored in departmental discussions of science issues.

* Plans to merge Intermountain and Rocky Mountain Stations and reorganize WO Headquarters are stalled:

    o Congress (through appropriations) has twice approved the INT/RM merger; the House and Senate in 1992, and the House again in 1996. Utah delegation has been briefed three-plus times. Secretary sent letter to delegation August 23, 1996, announcing intent to implement the reorganization.

- WO reorganization has been endorsed by Under Secretary for NRE, Secretary (in letter to Congress), and appropriations committees (in letter from Committees). Under Secretary for Administration now has the package.

* Eastern natural resource managers and politicians feel that they've gotten insufficient attention from the past two Chiefs. They feel a pro-western bias exists and the Forest Service has over-invested there.

  - We were directed to fill the NC Director's job in FY 1997 Appropriations bill after bitter confrontation with Cong. Yates' staffer, Jason Alderman. NC job has been vacant since 1992, yet in 1995 a replacement PNW Director was announced before the incumbent retired.

  - Southern governors and northeastern state foresters believe that policy decisions in western states have shifted timber harvest to the eastern states. Because they feel the increased cutting is a direct result of the President's Plan for the PNW, they want funding to shorten the inventory cycle in the east redirected from NFS budgets in the west.

* Forest Service Research Executive Team, aka "The Green Team," meets at least quarterly. The Green Team has pioneered new working relationships among field and WO leadership in the Forest Service.

* FSR is embarking on a strategic planning effort, the first since 1990. Partners seek a comprehensive strategic plan for all federally-funded forest research. Forest Research Committee followup to 7th American Forest Congress is providing impetus for a broader national strategic plan.

* FSR is making deliberate efforts to integrate science findings with natural resource management policy and decision making by participating in assessments, workshops, and critiques.

* Sustainability, an important issue for the FS, has key leadership provided by FSR.

  - FSR provides leadership through OSTP-CENR in developing the Vice-President's environmental report card for the year 2001.

  - FSR works closely with the USDA Office of Sustainable Development, headed by Adela Backiel. FSR provides about a half-time staff person to that office.

  - FSR is working on several fronts to implement programs consistent with the Santiago Declaration.

State and Private Forestry

What Is State and Private Forestry?

State and Private Forestry encompasses collaborative approaches, a diverse array of programs, a unique delivery system, and a broad, flexible legal authority. These are used to link forestry and conservation with people, from the inner city to remote rural areas, to sustain our communities and care for the Nation's forests across all ownerships. Certain State and Private Forestry program assistance to States, communities, and non-industrial private forest landowners requires matching contributions, often leveraging up to 8 times the Federal investment. These programs directly contribute to the national goals for air and water quality, wildlife habitat, production of goods and services, and the socio-economic well-being of communities.

The national State and Private Forestry organization includes:

- o Forest Health Protection — Director Ann Bartuska
- o Cooperative Forestry — Acting Director Bob Breazeale
- o Fire and Aviation Management — Director Mary Jo Lavin
- o Tribal Government Relationships — Coordinator position vacant

The Forest Service has not fully tapped the potential of its overall mission. We need to recognize the strategic value of State and Private Forestry programs working synergistically with our activities in Research, National Forest System, and other mission areas. By doing so, we would maximize outcomes on the land and for people and broaden our support base all along the continuum from the inner city to remote rural areas.

PRIMARY THEMES OF STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

Sustainability State and Private Forestry programs foster sustainable forest management and community vitality. For example, we:

* Conduct 331 insect and disease suppression, prevention and eradication projects annually on Federal, State and private lands. (Federal Lands/Cooperative Lands Forest Health Management)

* Strengthen the abilities of 1,600 natural resource-dependent rural communities through technical assistance and technology transfer that identify diversification and value-added opportunities for locally available natural resources. (Economic Action Programs)

* Aid workers, businesses and communities adjust to reduced Federal timber harvests in the Pacific Northwest, with $85 million awarded for more than 450 community-generated projects since 1993. (PNW Assistance Programs)

* Strengthen the capability of States and local communities to suppress wildfires by annually providing $100 million worth of excess Federal equipment, including aircraft. (Cooperative Lands Fire Management)

Collaboration State and Private Forestry programs are delivered by our employees working in close partnerships with State Foresters; other Federal agencies; State, local and Tribal governments; nongovernment organizations and citizen activist groups; and the private sector.

Shared management objectives are jointly defined and achieved by working across ownership boundaries and using voluntary, nonregulatory approaches. For example, we:

* Work with USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service to survey and eradicate invading non-native insects and diseases that will affect the long-term sustainability of forest resources. (Federal Lands/Cooperative Lands Forest Health Management)

* Provide leadership for a Federal partnership to carry out community-led environmental projects in 8 pilot cities. To date, through the Urban Resources Partnership, $14 million has been leveraged and hundreds of partners involved in completing 300 projects. (Urban and Community Forestry)

* Increase the ability of over 3,000 rural community volunteer fire departments to fight wildfires by providing cost-share grants to organize, train and equip them. (Cooperative Lands Fire Management)

* Work with 17 States to conserve environmentally important forests threatened with conversion to non-forest uses by acquiring easements or development rights. (Forest Legacy Program)

Stewardship State and Private Forestry staff work with State Foresters and others in applying scientifically-based forest management programs. For example, we:

* Survey approximately 90 percent of all forest lands (660 million acres) annually to assess forest health and insect and disease conditions and trends. (Federal Lands/Cooperative Lands Forest Health Management)

* Assist nonindustrial private forest landowners develop environmentally sound management plans to meet their management objectives, with 144,000 plans covering 14.6 million acres of forest completed since 1990. (Forest Stewardship Program)

* Provide cost-share assistance to apply stewardship practices that provide public benefits on private forest land, with 1.7 million acres of practices completed since 1991. (Stewardship Incentive Program)

* Reduce potential wildfire damage and improve the health of the ecosystem on the National Forest System by fuels treatment. (Wildland Fire Management)

Communication/Education We compile information, develop and share technology and expertise, and serve as a catalyst/facilitator for exchanging ideas and actively involving people in forest management. Using varied approaches, we sponsor and provide conservation education focusing on both adults and youth. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are key icons for conservation education activities. We employ a wide array of communication tools--from simple icons to professional publications or interactive learning computer programs. For example, we:

* Evaluate and advise land managers on forest health, insects and diseases and use of appropriate technologies. (Federal Lands Forest Health Management)

* Reach 5.6 million people annually through Natural Resource Conservation Education activities, including over 27,000 educators. (multi-funded)

* Train 1,000 interagency line and management personnel in wildland fire management, suppression, and other topics at our training center in Marana, Arizona. (Wildland Fire Management)

KEY ISSUES REQUIRING CHIEF'S ACTION IN NEXT 6 MONTHS

Deputy Chief
-- Operate with the standard that Regional Foresters, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers have State and Private Forestry responsibilities
-- Assess the National Research Council's study on effective Federal roles and approaches addressing nonfederal forest lands when the study is released in March

Forest Health Protection
-- Establish and implement the Forest Service's forest health policy
-- Integrate and streamline Forest Service inventory and monitoring efforts
-- Communicate about the health of the Nation's forests and what we are doing

Cooperative Forestry
-- Establish working relationship with USDA Sustainable Development Director and Council
-- Keynote National Collaborative Planning Workshop, April 1997
-- Seek support from key congressional members and committee staff for the State and Private Forestry programs
-- Become knowledgeable of State level program committees and their roles
-- Participate in key Earth Day activities (April 22) featuring redesigned Woodsy Owl

Fire and Aviation Management
-- Support implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Policy (FIRE 21)
-- Keep firefighter and public safety as top priority
-- Integrate fire and aviation into forest land management planning
-- Recognize role of fire in restoring and sustaining ecosystems
-- Clarify Federal role in wildland/urban interface
-- Ensure preparedness for 1997 fire season
-- Improve line officer accountability
-- Sign FIRE 21 card
-- Make video for fire management session
-- Make keynote speech at interagency training course in Marana, AZ, March 16

Tribal Governments
-- Consult with Tribes on effects of management activities on treaty rights
-- Continue efforts to obtain National Forest System lands for reservations
-- Address treaty rights in Wilderness areas

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

National Association of State Foresters/State Foresters
National Governors Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of Conservation Districts
Advertising Council
The Nature Conservancy
American Forests
National Arbor Day Foundation
National Tree Trust Foundation
Tribal Governments
Federal Emergency Management Agency
USDA: Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Cooperative State Cooperative Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES); Rural Development mission area

National Forest System

Water Resource Management Issues

Nonpoint Source Management: The Forest Service has long advocated that the Clean Water Act (CWA) provides a clear distinction between point sources and nonpoint sources of pollution. This distinction is necessary because management strategies for these two pollution sources are necessarily different. In developing regulation and guidance, EPA has blurred the distinction, seeking stronger enforcement authority over nonpoint sources. In resisting these efforts, the Forest Service is seeking the development of management strategies consistent with known principles of natural resource management. The Forest Service is not seeking relief from its responsibilities for environmental protection. In concert with other land management agencies, the Forest Service needs to work with EPA on development of meaningful regulation and guidance.

State Certification: A Federal District Court in Oregon has held that Federal grazing permit applicants must obtain state certification that they will not violate water quality standards before a Federal permit can be issued. As written, this opinion will apply to all Federal permits and licenses. In development of Federal programs, most agencies have assumed this section of the CWA applies only to point sources and not to nonpoint sources. Because of potentially insurmountable technical difficulties associated with such a certification, and because the government's current position is correct on the law and should prevail on appeal, the Forest Service and BLM believe this decision should be appealed. The EPA disagrees. This issue must be resolved by the DOJ prior to the deadline date for appeal on January 19, 1997. The Forest Service will need to work closely with the Department, OGC, and DOJ in development of the Government's position.

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs): For those pollutants that are determined to be suitable for such analysis, the States are required to develop total maximum daily pollutant loads that are consistent with a water bodies ability to assimilate pollutants and still provide for identified uses. As a matter of law, the FS believes that Section 303(d) of the CWA requiring development of TMDLs applies only to point sources. As a practical matter, it is not possible to determine such loads for nonpoint sources. While disagreeing with the FS on legal interpretation, the EPA has developed an acceptable nonpoint source BMP approach for nonpoint sources associated with the TMDL program. However, it is only a matter of time before the State and/ or EPA is challenged on the basis of not having developed a total maximum daily load, and instead relaying on land management prescriptions. Because it will not be possible to calculate such loads for nonpoint sources, or to measure for compliance, FS land management activities will be delayed or stopped. In cooperation with other land management agencies the Forest Service needs to continue work with EPA to change their CWA regulation and guidance to be consistent with accepted nonpoint source management strategies

Forest Service Water Resources Policy: Watershed and Air Management is currently developing an implementation strategy to ensure that responsibilities for protection of the basic soil and water resources are being met by the Forest Service. This could result in changes to line officer responsibilities and accountability.

Soils Program

The major **purpose** of the Soils Program Area is to **minimize the occurrence of costly land management issues** by identifying the **limits of land capability**, and providing information, knowledge and skills necessary to manage within such limits.

The **mission** of the **Soils Program** is to support the overall Forest Service mission to **maintain ecosystem sustainability** by maintaining or improving **Soil Quality** and **long-term soil productivity**.

The mission is accomplished through the following activities:

--**Soil Resource/Ecological Unit Inventory**, in order to evaluate and map inherent capability of the land, and predict effects/responses of use and management activities. This inventory/mapping activity is conducted at various scales, depending on identified management needs.

--**Monitoring** effects that land use and management activities have on various **soil quality** paramaters, and long-term soil productivity.

--**Soil Management Support Services** - Professional consultation services for specific resource mangagement projects, and land management planning activities. To prevent or help solve problems.

--**Soil Quality Improvement** in places where Soil quality has been degraded.

--The concept of **Soil Quality** refers to how well a soil performs its **functions**, relative to its "natural" capability.

--**Soil functions** include:

--Sustaining biological activity, diversity & productivity

--Regulating and partitioning water & solute flow

--Filtering, buffering, degrading, immobilizing, detoxifying industrial & municipal by-products (pollutants) including atmospheric depositions

--Storing and cycling nutrients, energy, and other elements within the earth's biosphere

--Providing support for socio-economic structures, and protection for archeological treasures associated with human habitation

Issues associated with the Soils Program Area:

1. Declining skill pool/work force. Many of the soil science positions, both in the NFS, and in Research, that are vacated, are not being refilled. There is a critical lack of Trainee and other relatively early-career soil scientists in the Forest Service.

2. Lack of appreciation among unit managers of the critical need for Soil Science Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in order to assure ecosystem sustainability. (evidenced by # 1, above).

3. Competition for scarce EPIM funds to accomplish critical Inventory and Monitoring involving the soil resources. (The most prominent examples are Ecological Unit Inventory, and the National Long-Term Soil Productivity Study).

Delegation of Authority: The Department of Agriculture has delegated to the Chief of the Forest Service, the authority to work with EPA on Forest Service issues. This includes all of the environmental acts: Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, etc. The Watershed and Air Staff in NFS includes an EPA liaison position (Neil Berg), and technical specialists in Air Quality (Donna Lamb and Rich Fisher), Water Quality and Quantity (Warren Harper and Russ LaFayette). The Staff recommends that Chief Dombeck meet with top EPA officials as soon as possible.

New National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone and Particulates: EPA has proposed new standards for these air pollutants. The Forest Service and the Department will be working on a joint response to the proposal in the next month. The health evidence is compelling and it is unlikely that we will comment on that. We will be commenting on the secondary standard proposals. The Forest Service has over 30 years of research on the Ozone effects on forests. (There is strong evidence for other crop damage as well, and for soil nitrification because of Ozone precursors.) Our scientists worked diligently on the form for the secondary standard for Ozone. Our visibility protection responsibilities under the Clean Air Act are directly affected by the proposed secondary standard for particulates. **How the new standards are implemented may be more important than the levels themselves (see next two items).**

Implementing the new standards for Ozone, Particulates and Regional Haze: The Chief of the Forest Service is a member of a subcommittee of the Clean Air Act Advisory Committee. This subcommittee was set up under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to look for innovative ways to implement the new standards. This group has been meeting for over a year to develop market based strategies and incentives. Donna Lamb, Art Bryant, and Bill McCleese have been attending for the Chief. The group will be finalizing much of its work in the next 6 to 9 months. (Other members include Paul Johnson, NRCS, and Molly Ross, DOI). We will formally notify EPA that Mike Dombeck has replaced Jack Ward Thomas and should at that time also designate any alternates (suggest Bryant and Lamb).

Implications for Wildland Fire: EPA has set up a special group that will operate as an ad hoc group under the FACA committee above. Mary Jo Lavin and Donna Lamb represent the Forest Service on this group. EPA strongly supports the need for prescribed fire. There are some states, environmental, and industry groups that do not share that view. This committee is set up to address some major issues where there is an appearance of a conflict between the Clean Air Act and other land management laws. (While the Craig Bill tries to circumvent the Clean Air Act, this committee would address how prescribed fire can be increased within the Act.) The workgroups for this committee will begin work this month and will provide their final products by year end. Tom Patten, F&AM will coordinate the many activities to minimize duplication of effort and provide a clear Forest Service position.

Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission: The commission was charged with developing recommendations to EPA for protecting the visibility in the Grand Canyon. They also addressed other Class I areas, including several managed by the Forest Service. The GCVTC submitted its Report to EPA last year. The group plans to continue to meet to implement the recommendations in their report. Chip Cartwright, Regional Forester in R-3 has represented the Chief on that commission. Chief Dombeck should formally confirm that he continue in that role. Jerry Williams, R-1, and Pete Lahm, R-3 have been appointed to coordinate with DOI in developing strategies for implementing the recommendations in the Federal agencies.

Programs and Legislation

National Forest Foundation

The National Forest Foundation (NFF) was established by Congress in 1990 as a charitable, nonprofit District of Columbia corporation. The purposes of the NFF are to encourage and accept donations and gifts for the benefit of the Forest Service; conduct activities that further the purposes of National Forest and National Grassland management; encourage educational and other assistance that supports multiple use, research, cooperative forestry, and other programs administered by the Forest Service; and to promote cooperation among the Forest Service, the private sector, and other governmental and educational institutions. The NFF is dedicated to promoting conservation and the wise use of natural resources throughout the United States and the world community.

The foundation is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture for terms of 6 years. The Chief of the Forest Service is an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Board. There are currently three vacancies on the NFF Board of Directors. Several names have been submitted to the Board's Search Committee to be included in their recommendations to the Secretary.

The NFF Act (Public Law 101-593 as amended) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide $1,000,000 in matching funds to the Foundation for administrative and project expenses incurred by the NFF to be appropriated annually through fiscal year 1997. The Forest Service is currently working on reauthorization of this provision since it expires the end of fiscal year 1997.

The NFF accepted its first donations in October of 1992, and since that time has raised over $4.5 million. Many accomplishments have been made over the past year, including financial assistance to families who lost relatives fighting forest fires; financial assistance to employees who were victims of malicious bombings; supported many conservation projects such as the reconstruction of an underwater fish viewing stream profile chamber at the Taylor Creek Visitor's Center; improved habitat for the Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout; funded watershed restoration projects at the Gros Ventre River and the Sangre De Cristo watershed; and provided financial support to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. The Foundation continues to support youth and education programs by sponsoring two Youth Forest Camps and two urban tree houses in FY 1996 and will continue to assist the FS in expanding its Challenge Cost-Share program by locating and working with private sector partners to match $1.5 million in appropriated funds from recreation and wildlife.

The outlook for the Foundation in FY 1997 and FY 1998 is bright. A membership program is currently underway to generate more grassroots support for the NFF. Interactive kiosks are being pilot tested at 11 visitor centers in each Region to provide local information to visitors. The NFF plans to continue seeking funds to update interpretive exhibits at visitor information centers through corporate sponsorships and fund raising efforts. From 1994 through 1996, the NFF averaged over $1 million dollars per- year in private sector donations while holding administrative overhead costs below 10 percent.

Lamar Beasley, former FS Deputy Chief for Adm., is the NFF President. He is located in Franklin Court and can be reached at 202-501-2473. Gerry Farmer, Staff Assistant to the Deputy Chief in P&L, is the FS liaison and can be reached at 202-205-1265.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS
January 7, 1997

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International Forestry

Budget History: International Forestry (IF) was a small Staff in the Research Deputy area for many years. In 1990, the Farm Bill mandated the establishment of a Deputy Chief for IF, elevating the international mission of the Forest Service. In FY 1994, the IF budget line was established with an appropriation of $7 million. In FY 1995, Congress originally appropriated $7 million for the program but the 1995 Rescissions Act reduced it by approximately $2 million. FY 1996 action included no funding for the International Budget Line Item and directed the Forest Service not to maintain a separate Deputy Chief for IF. However, the agency was authorized to spend up to $4 million on IF activities, financed from benefitting FS programs. In FY 1997, this amount was reduced to $3 million. In addition to Forest Service funding, IF has leveraged funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other external cooperators each year. In FY 1996, external funds totaled $3 million for technical cooperation and disaster assistance programs.

Personnel: IF currently has 30 FTEs, representing a 40 percent cut from FY 1994. Fifteen positions are funded by the Forest Service and 15 through reimbursable agreements with cooperators such as USAID and the Peace Corps. Morale is generally good among staff members.

Key Partners: IF engages the Forest Service to team up with key players in other government agencies, counterparts of foreign governments, environmental non-governmental organizations, and private industry to work on the most critical forest policy and management issues affecting the United States and cooperating countries alike. Some of the important players include:

- State Department's Office of Environmental Science
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Non-governmental organizations, including Conservation International, World Resources Institute, World Wildlife Fund, and The Nature Conservancy
- USAID
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- American Forest and Paper Association
- National Association of State Foresters (NASF)
- Global Forest Policy Project (Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth, and Sierra Club)

Recent Accomplishments:

* IF has successfully promoted the FS as the lead agency on forest policy issues within the U.S. Government through expert technical assistance at international negotiations and forums. Illustrating this point is the 1996 resolution by the NASF supporting the FS lead in promoting sustainable forest management through Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management for which IF has the Forest Service responsibility.

* Despite budget cuts and personnel cutbacks, IF has increased FS field involvement in its international activities, strengthening ties to the technical experts in the Forest Service.

* IF has catalyzed technical collaboration with major forested countries of the world including Brazil, Indonesia, Russia, Mexico, and the People's Republic of China--all of which are ecologically and economically important partners for the United States.

* Last year the Disaster Assistance Support Program tapped Forest Service personnel to fight fires and provide logistics management, telecommunications, and training for relief workers in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Mongolia.

* Three Adaptive Management Areas became participants in the International Model Forest Network promoting international cooperation at the field level.

* Initiated annual, joint FS-Colorado State University IF Seminar Program with participants from around the world.

PROBLEMS

EXTERNAL SUPPORT: Despite the strong support IF enjoyed in FY 1994, our funding suffered under the 104th Congress, as did most international programs in the Government. There is general support in Congress for IF's forest policy work because of its potential trade implications. We have been less successful in garnering support for our technical cooperation program.

INTERNAL SUPPORT: This year marks an improvement in recognition and support for the IF program at the National Leadership Team level due to our increased success in involving FS researchers and land managers in international activities. However, IF needs to integrate the Forest Service into its program more, as some FS units do not view international work as related or beneficial to the Forest Service's overall program. Given that our funding comes off the top of the FS budget, IF needs to better communicate the relevance and the benefits it brings to the entire agency.

PRIORITIES FOR CHIEF'S INVOLVEMENT

The Message: In communicating within the Forest Service and with Congress, we recommend the Chief emphasize: (1) the relevance and benefits of international work to the domestic program, (2) the inter-connectedness of international and domestic environmental issues, and (3) the Forest Service's global conservation responsibility.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): The Chief may be called upon to explain the Forest Service's position against listing big leaf mahogany on Appendix II of CITES (based on available science and the CITES criteria for listing). Secretary Glickman is now considering the final Department position based on the policy implications of listing. Secretary Glickman has recently recommended listing mahogany based on policy implications.

Criteria and Indicators (C&I): The United States has adopted a set of C&I for sustainable forest management through the Santiago declaration. Pursuant to this commitment, the United States is preparing a 1st Approximation Report on C&I. We would like to provide a detailed briefing on important events which will start in 2 weeks.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on Forestry (COFO) meets every 2 years, and provides the Chief with the only opportunity to meet the heads of the world's forestry agencies. The Chief traditionally heads the U.S. delegation which will include representatives from the State Department, State Foresters, industry, and environmental organizations. It is the United States' turn to chair the next meeting scheduled for March 10-14 in Rome.

The World Forestry Congress (October 13-22) is held every 6 years, and is a good opportunity for the Forest Service to demonstrate conservation leadership. The Chief heads the U.S. delegation which will consist of participants from non-governmental organizations, academia, industry, and Congress. International Forestry and Forest Service Research would like to provide a detailed briefing on this as well.

OPPORTUNITIES

Attract new partners and external funding for our international work by leveraging the tremendous professional expertise of the FS.

Develop long-term international field programs around areas of FS technical expertise and more effectively involve Forest Service field units in international work.

Increase Forest Service influence on forest policy work in the international arena with IF's major partners, promote U.S. domestic policy through international forums.

Increase Forest Service's role in international research and field organizations such as CIFOR, the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, ITTO, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I)

Overview: The Law Enforcement and Investigations Staff (LE&I) is organized in a "straight line reporting structure," with the Director of LE&I reporting to the Chief. All law enforcement officers (LEOs), special agents (SA), and support personnel report to the Director. This organization was established as a result of Congressional direction contained in the FY 1994 appropriation language.

Program Data:

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
Budget: NFLE	$64.0mm*	63.5	59.6**	59.6	67.4	66.4
Staffing						
LEOs	455	485	466	422***	508	498
Spec Agents	181	162	140	130	145	142

*includes fire funding **additional $2.3mm reprogrammed
***estimated based on allocation FY 1997-FY 1999

Approximately $5.3 million is allocated to County Sheriffs for cooperative law enforcement.

Significant Issues: The LE&I organization faces issues which are unique to the staff and some that are common to all other Forest Service staffs. Key issues are:

FY 1997 Budget - The LE&I program faces a significant budget deficit in FY 1997. It is estimated that a reduction of approximately 45-50 employees will be necessary to operate within the current allocation. This action will follow a reduction of 41 positions which occurred in FY 1996. The Director has requested that $4.0 million be reprogrammed into NFLE (reference letter of 1November 04, 1996).

Timber Theft - Extensive attention is focused on Forest Service commitment to the prevention, detection, and investigation of timber theft. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and the Government Accountability Project (GAP) have made serious charges regarding elimination of the Timber Theft Investigations Branch and alleges that corporate timber theft is occurring unabated in Alaska. The LE&I Staff has successfully conducted timber theft investigations, and considers theft prevention, detection and investigation a top priority. The staff is cooperating with Timber Management in the preparation of a comprehensive theft prevention program. In response to a request from the regional forester, LE&I conducted a timber theft vulnerability review in Alaska, and concluded that no evidence exists to support allegations of major timber theft.

National Forest Drug Control Program - The National Forest Drug Control Act of 1986, as amended, directs the Forest Service to take action specific to the control of illicit drug activity on National Forest Land. While primarily oriented towards elimination of Cannabis, activities such as interdiction of cocaine smuggling and the elimination of clandestine drug labs are also a key emphasis. In 1995, the Forest Service arrested 2,095 (51 percent increase from 1994) in connection with illegal drug activities. Southern border operations are a key part of this effort. This program is an important aspect of protecting resources and providing a safer environment for employees and the public.

Southern Border Operations - Approximately 20 LEOs are assigned to resource protection, drug interdiction, and public and employee safety operations on the Cleveland National Forest. This is in response to direction from President Clinton. This operation has a significant benefit to the United States Border Patrol, however, no supplemental funding has been received. The

temporary placement of employees is very costly, totaling $710m in FY 1996. Similar issues exist on the Coronado National Forest in Region 3.

Terrorism, Environmental Protests, and Employee Safety - Major environmental protests are occurring in the Pacific Northwest, including Regions 1 and 6. To date over 960 arrests have been made. The protests focus on the harvesting of old growth timber and salvage timber sales. On October 28, a Forest Service vehicle was burned. Extensive grafitti from a group called the Earth Liberation Front was found at the scene. Transmittals on the Internet called for "7 days of terror." Two days later, the Oakridge Ranger Station was burned to the ground. Arson was determined to be the cause. The public is polarized on this issue, and many employees are expressing concern for their safety.

Role of the LE&I Staff Director - The LE&I Staff functions in a unique manner within the Forest Service. With a total 650 employees spread throughout the National Forest System, operating under a unified budget with a straight line supervisory structure, it is necessary to view roles and activities differently than other WO staffs. Budgeting systems, personnel ceilings, and expectations of WO staffs often do not compliment the operational demands of LE&I. There is a need for the Chief to understand how the LE&I staff needs flexibility in adhering to routine WO budget and personnel management processes.

Program Integration - A principle objective of LE&I is to assure the program operates in full compliance with the guidelines from the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency as a professional law enforcement organization, while achieving maximum cooperation and integration with resource management line officers. All regional special agents in Charge have a critical element specific to achieving program integration. It is a primary emphasis item for the Director.

CORPORATE TEAMS

Corporate Teams of the Washington Office

Issue: Informative briefing on background, establishment and current status of "corporate" teams, including Ecosystem Management, Information Management, and WO Directors.

Background: The Chief asked the staff directors, who had recently organized into a collective body, to:

a. Assess the function and structure of major teams in the WO, and
b. Recommend a process and structure for NLT recognition and interaction with teams.

Frequently the NLT is petitioned to Charter and fund a team effort or initiative. The National Leadership Team (NLT) were not aware of the collective, ongoing major and minor team activities as a context in which to evaluate Charter proposals.

The Washington Office reengineering effort identified the need for greater cross-program communications and coordination. In describing different teams, the Proposal for Re-structuring the WO (May 1995) defined nonpermanent "issue" and "ad hoc" teams. As contrasted to these, the Proposal defined "corporate" teams as permanently established teams to accomplish recurring corporate activities, and usually staffed by employees who do not serve full time but, due to the continuing nature of the work, are permanently assigned to the team.

The directors surveyed the WO staffs for ongoing teams, with over 60 being identified. These teams were largely program sponsored or interagency issue teams. However, there were two groups of inter-staff, inter-related issue teams--those dealing with ecosystem management, and those dealing with information management. There was also a third group of unrelated, but significant interstaff issue teams.

The directors interviewed a variety of teams to better understand how the teams were initiated, how they operated, and how they coordinated with other efforts. The directors also reviewed previous proposals to the NLT for team charters. Based on these analyses, the directors recommended to the NLT that three corporate teams be formally established: Ecosystem Management, Information Management and staff directors (see attachment), with functions as described below. The NLT accepted this recommendation.

Ecosystem Management Corporate Team: The EMCT would broadly coordinate the individual issue teams involved in ecosystem management-related efforts, including natural and cultural resources, health, stewardship, sustainability, inventory, planning and monitoring. The EMCT would integrate, prioritize and represent to the NLT funding and staffing needs for these team efforts, i.e., individual issue teams would not go directly to the NLT for resources. The EMCT would charter, or represent to the NLT the need to charter, any additional ecosystem management related issue teams.

Co-chaired by Bill Sommers, Research; Ann Bartuska, S&PF; and Chris Risbrudt, NFS, the EMCT has drafted a charter and been operating within these guidelines for nearly a year. Membership includes interested Directors or their representatives, plus other interested individuals as appropriate. The EMCT meets monthly and also coordinates closely with the Inter-regional Ecosystem Management Coordinating Group.

Information Management Corporate Team: The IMCT would broadly coordinate the individual issue teams involved in integrated information management, as described in the 1992 IM Framework document. The IMCT would integrate, prioritize and represent to the NLT funding and staffing needs for these team efforts, i.e., individual issue teams would not go directly to the NLT for resources. The IMCT would charter, or represent to the NLT the need to charter, any additional information management related issue teams.

The IMCT is not presently operational. The Information Management Advisory Group (IMAG) described in the IM Framework was established, consisting of a diverse group across and down the FS. However, the IMAG became bogged down when leadership was diverted to the FS re-invention effort and closure was not brought to the Agency-Wide Strategy Stage report. A review of lessons learned from the IMAG experience was made in August. An ad hoc group is now in the process of proposing IMCT membership and charter.

Staff Directors Corporate Team: The SDCT will staff out all proposals for NLT charters, other than EM or IM, and will provide NLT recommendations accordingly. The SDCT lightly monitors other ongoing significant issue teams, and the EMCT and IMCT. This includes establishing Folders for Other Issue Teams, EM Issue Teams and IM Issue teams in a public DG Drawer. These folders will contain a brief description and contact for each issue team, with the information available for all FS employees.

The SDCT operates with a working group including one or two representatives from each Deputy Area plus PAO plus Dave Radloff as an ad hoc member. The SDCT has developed an Issues Delegation Model (see attached). The working group meets approximately monthly, considering a wide range of issue topics and proposals in the framework of the Delegation Model. Working group recommendations are shared with all Directors for discussion before decisions are made. Periodically, All Directors meetings are held to discuss critical issues and to share opportunities of a wide interest.

Attachment A(1): Corporate & Associated Issue Teams

*EM	*IMAG	Staff Dir
EM Working Group	IMAG Working Group	Working Group
*Forest Health	Infrastructure Steering	
Implementation Team	Committee	
Strategy Team	People	
*Sustainability	Protection	
Ecological Stewardship	Natural Resources	
*Range Health	*NRIS	
EM Assessments	*Inventory and Monitoring	
Conference/Workshop	Common Survey Data Structure	
*FS/BLM Riparian	Soils Data	
*Ecomap	Climate/Weather Data	
*Rangeland Assessment	Property Rights	
IM&T	GIS	
*Human Dimensions	FGDC	
*Inven & Mon Institute		
*Noxious Weeds		

Table A(2): Other Issue Teams

Below Cost Sales
Salvage Sales
Americans with Disabilities Act Team
Remote Sensing Steering Committee
Owl Team
Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Team
Federal Facilities Compliance
E-mail Team

* Teams interviewed.

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